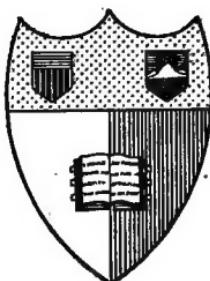


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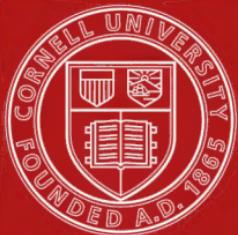
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MAKERS OF THE NEW WORLD



Photo : Central News.

**Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, M. BRIAND and
MARSHAL FOCH.**

MAKERS OF THE NEW WORLD

By
One Who Knows Them

With 16 Illustrations

Cassell and Company, Ltd
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
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THE PRIME MINISTER

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I

THE PRIME MINISTER

MR. LLOYD GEORGE is the *doyen* of the Peace Conference, for he is the only Minister who, as such, saw the war through from beginning to end. One by one the great figures have dropped out. There were many who did not survive the war from one cause or another. Those names that were on everyone's lips in 1914—Grey, Asquith, Kitchener, the Kaiser, Bethmann-Hollweg; and then again during the Peace Conference in Paris—Wilson, Orlando, Clemenceau—where are they now?

It is perhaps of more importance than is usually realized that there was one figure who, while surviving the whole of the war, was still

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able to retain his authority from beginning to end of the Peace Conference. That figure is Lloyd George, who remains the sole survivor in office of the original Great Four. Little wonder then that from this cause alone the influence of Great Britain at these Conferences is paramount, and events, and even the fate of Ministries in other European countries, hang upon what is decided by the British Premier, and his attitude towards their claims.

But apart from this, and whatever preconceived ideas those who assembled in Paris for the momentous Conference may have had of Lloyd George, his genius as a tactician and conciliator were undeniable. It is too early yet to determine what the world owes to him for his labours in Paris, but no one who was at all behind the scenes at the Peace Conference would dream of questioning the largeness of the obligation.

More than once the Conference might have broken up in confusion had it not been for his gifts of mediating between angry forces—Clemenceau angry, stubborn, and so obsessed with the wrong done to “la Patrie” that all vision of the vital need for allied unity was obscured;

The Prime Minister

Wilson vainglorious, tactless, pursuing uncompromisingly his own ideals of international relations; Orlando hysterical and emotional. It needed all the magnetism of an unusual personality to keep these conflicting elements in any sort of concurrence.

It has become almost an axiomatic criticism, and one not without a certain justification, to say that Mr. Lloyd George is impulsive, that he wearies of one problem and turns to another, that he is impatient to arrive at a conclusion and a solution. Surely those who have condemned him thus must reverse their judgment after watching him at these Conferences during the last two years. Impatient—yes, but with those who obstruct or delay, or are incompetent, or lazy. Impulsive—yes, but with the sure instinct of genius, which travels in a flash to the end of the road where others arrive after labour and travail, and where many do not arrive at all, having fainted by the wayside or mistaken the path.

There are innumerable concrete instances of his foresight. Time after time during the war, before he had assumed full power, and when

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things were drifting hopelessly to the utter despair of many who knew the inner history of events, Lloyd George rose like Cassandra and warned his colleagues of the fatal results of their mistakes or their indecision. He knew that Paschendaele would be a failure, that, given the facts as they were, it could not be otherwise than a failure, involving the loss of thousands of gallant lives, and wasting forces which might have been used later on to such good purpose. He foretold the result accurately. And, like Cassandra, it was fated that his words should not be believed, or at least that they should fall unheeded. The soldiers thought it out of place that a civilian—and a politician!—should venture to criticize their strategy and their computations.

So with Rumania. He was Secretary of State for War when he realized how the affairs of that little country were being mismanaged so far as the Allies were concerned, but anyone who has had any experience of the War Office knows how that vast and unwieldy machine throttles, thwarts, and tricks even those who would wish to serve it well. A Secretary of State has no business to interfere with strategy

The Prime Minister

or plans. He was there to protect the soldiers when they made mistakes, to take his place in the House of Commons and defend hideous blunders and horrible casualties—but advice, who asked for that?

It was given in the cause of Rumania, but not taken. Warning after warning was sent out by Mr. Lloyd George at that time, question after question as to what was being done, but they met with no response. He foresaw the danger, but who in that throng of brass hats cared about the East? If any did, they had not the power to act. And so Rumania fell, and another small Ally went under.

But he did not always foretell disaster. In January, 1917, he paid a visit to Rome, and a Conference was held there to provide for the safety of Italy's frontiers in case of attack. Mr. Lloyd George said that in his opinion Germany's plan of campaign for 1917 would be to break Russia up, render her powerless, and then turn all her available troops upon Italy in order to put her *hors de combat*. He suggested that detailed plans should be drawn up as to what could be done in that event—how many troops

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England and France should put at Italy's disposal, how soon they could reach their destination, what guns and ammunition would be required, and so on. It was done.

The Germans acted as Mr. Lloyd George had foreseen, Russia was rendered innocuous, and Germany turned her attention towards finishing off Italy. But the Allied plans were ready, and when the Caporetto incident happened the Allies were able with a rapidity which baffled the enemy to throw large forces into Italy. Thus the tide of invasion was turned and Italy was saved. So determined was Mr. Lloyd George that this time, at any rate, we should not fail that he went there in person with experienced British and French generals to confer with Italian statesmen and generals on the spot and to concert encouragement and support.

A hurried Conference was held at the little town of Rapallo. The situation was discussed thoroughly, all precautions taken and all eventualities prepared for. Even at that moment, in accordance with the plans prepared in January, the French *camions* were climbing over the

The Prime Minister

mountains night and day in one endless line, carrying forward the supplies and equipment for the French divisions that were hurrying to the aid of the broken Italian Army. The British reinforcements were coming by the Mediterranean railway, and French and British troops went into action together on the Italian front. The plans initiated in January for this contingency were already working.

This Conference at Rapallo lasted but two or three days, but during that time a seed was sown which led to the ultimate winning of the war. It was then that the Prime Minister was able for the first time to discuss with any possibility of realization the project which had been turning itself round in his brain for many months —one might almost say from the beginning of the war—the plan of an inter-allied command for the direction of the war.

His position at the Peace Conference and his status compared with President Wilson and M. Clemenceau were put forth in a few lines by a clever but not too friendly British journalist, who wrote :

“Mr. Lloyd George was an intermediary

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between the two. Agile, fertile in brilliant, sometimes dangerous, compromises, he leaned now to one side, now to the other, turning the scales at his will. It is agreed that he was the real master of the Conference. If he adopted the arguments of M. Clemenceau, he presented them in a sweeter and more agreeable way. If he borrowed those of Mr. Wilson, he translated them practically to M. Clemenceau's taste. Where he went, there was victory. He made the two autocrats, French and American, dance to his tune. He was the super-autocrat."

In spite of the energy and foresight which he showed during the war, the unequalled superiority in negotiation which he showed during the Peace Conference, there is no man more criticized. But what is the use of criticizing him? Accustomed to the give and take of political life for over thirty years, the set-backs, the buffets and the disappointments leave him unruffled, all the more because they never serve to deflect him from his purpose, which he knows he will attain in good time, if it is worthy of attainment.

It is not the big things which he worries

The Prime Minister

about. He will deal with great problems with an unruffled countenance. If you see him looking irritable and inclined to be bad-tempered, it is probably because there is some trifling worry about which he cannot make up his mind. He often tells how in the early days of his career he once saw Lord Morley sitting deep in thought, his head in his hands, as though some awful care were weighing on him; and how the old man turned to him and said solemnly: “Young man, as you get older you will discover that the most difficult thing in life is to make up your mind about small things.” Mr. Lloyd George discovered that he was probably worrying as to whether or not he should accept a dinner invitation.

Someone said of him that he was like a submarine. He will lie interminably hidden under the water, with his periscope just showing, and giving no sign that he is there. And then, when he thinks that the precise moment has come, the fatal shot will be fired, and will get home.

He was like this during the war. He lay low until he thought the time was ripe, and then the torpedo would be driven home. He was like

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this during the Peace Conference. He would allow President Wilson to continue lecturing the Conference Delegates from his Mount of Beatitudes, inculcating the exalted principles on the altar of which British or French interests were to be sacrificed. The British Premier would bide his time until the exhortation had come to an end. He would then quietly refer to the German ships which were still interned in American harbours, and which he knew the Americans intended to retain for themselves. Or else he would make a reference to the American casualties and remind the President that they were less in number than those of Australia. And President Wilson would wince and hesitate, and his arguments would lose their point.

A great deal of Mr. Lloyd George's fighting in Conference was done in a light vein, a bantering tone, difficult to avert and deadly in effect. He knows that ridicule can kill. He knows that most men fear a sentence which makes them look foolish more than a column of solemn abuse or vituperation.

He has an uncanny knowledge of his fellow

The Prime Minister

men. It does not take him long to get the measure of a man—to tell just what he is fitted for, how great a task can be entrusted to him. He once said that men are like the lorries one used to see during the war marked, “Load not to exceed three tons.” “They can carry any load up to three tons, safely and well,” he explained; “give them a load in excess of that, and they will break down.” He can tell the man who will be able to carry any load, and once he has marked such a man he will back him through thick and thin.

Mr. Keynes, in his unfriendly and much-quoted book on the Peace Conference, gives an instance of this uncanny knowledge of men: “The British Prime Minister, watching the company with six of seven senses not available to ordinary men, judging character, motive, and sub-conscious impulse, perceiving what each was thinking and even what each was going to say next, and compounding with telepathic instinct the argument or appeal best suited to the vanity, weakness or self-interest of his immediate auditor . . .”

He prefers to choose his own men—the long

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established and the experts are swept aside if he thinks they are not equal to their tasks. "Experts!" exclaimed a member of the Conference. "When did Lloyd George ever take the advice of experts?" He will consult anyone who he thinks is likely to give him useful advice, but he will not accept the dogmatic counsels of dry-as-dust officials. Contact with the Lloyd George mind is the acid test of whether a man has fallen into a groove. The average civil servant throws up his hands in despair.

He marked out Sir Henry Wilson as being one of the few soldiers with a genius for war, and after long opposition from every quarter—political and military—he succeeded in making him Chief of the General Staff. He marked Foch out from the beginning of the war as being a remarkable man, and after a struggle, the dimensions of which the public even now do not properly comprehend—and only in the nick of time—realized his dream of making him the paramount director of the Allied armies.

The struggle both here and in France was hard and prolonged, and fought to the last ditch. There was a powerful opposition in England,

The Prime Minister

especially in military circles, and in France it is well known that Clemenceau disliked Foch, and would have preferred Pétain, whom Briand had dismissed. But once Mr. Lloyd George made up his mind on this point, he allowed nothing to stand in the way of its attainment, and though he suffered many reverses he won through in the end. Foch himself is the first to admit that he owed his position to Mr. Lloyd George.

Mr. Lloyd George has, too, an instinct for the weak points in an enemy's armour, and in due time will pierce the joints. When they disagreed, even Clemenceau found it difficult to parry his nimble adversary, but the old warrior would take it all in good part. He would just come up to Mr. Lloyd George, take hold of him by the lapels of his coat—a habit he has—shake his old head and say : “ You have been very bad boy to-day ! ”

He knows just how far enemies—and friends—can be trusted. He gave Mr. Asquith a piece of good advice when the latter was receiving effusive support from certain newspaper proprietors who wished to use him to serve their own ends. “ My advice to Mr. Asquith,” he

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said, “is not to venture too far along the tow-path with them on a dark night—unless he can swim ! ”

He will get his own way in small things as in great. When in Paris it was necessary for him constantly to speak on the telephone to London, in order to keep in daily touch with events there. He was very annoyed when it became evident that the line was being tapped, but triumphed over the inquisitive listeners by installing a Welshman at the London end of the telephone and carrying on all his conversations in Welsh. The confusion and even resentment of the eavesdroppers was manifest in their remonstrances when they discovered that no one could understand this strange tongue !

Mr. Lloyd George loves the simple things of life, loathing artificiality and pretence. “I would rather take my place before the Judgment Seat with the sinners than with the hypocrites,” he once said. His tastes are simple, his appetite is simple, his pleasures are simple also. He is true to his instinct, which has not been perverted by a life of luxury and ease. He is slow to hate, but when once a man has made an enemy of

The Prime Minister

him (and it must be after long provocation) he rarely forgives.

The great secret of Lloyd George's success and also of his power for getting things done, is his vitality. Even those who know him best wonder at the amount of work he is able to get through and the untiring quality of his brain.

His office is no place for dreamers and laggards. From morning till night his active mind is working, nor does he give it respite even at meal times. Every meal is with him an opportunity for seeing his colleagues or others, and discussing and deciding things with them. One would have thought that he might share with many others the drawback of not being at his best at breakfast time. Breakfast in bed is recommended by the faculty, and many statesmen avail themselves of this. But he declares that he can do three times as much work at breakfast time as at any other time of the day. "If you find me tired at breakfast time, you can write me off as a political force," he always says.

It is the custom with people who make a habit of writing intimate things about people whom they have never met and therefore cannot

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know, to insinuate that Mr. Lloyd George is ignorant about books, is ill-read, and, one might almost say, according to some writers, illiterate. This is more than untrue ; it is malicious.

Far from not being a lover of books, books are indispensable to Mr. Lloyd George. He has always on hand two or three which he is in course of reading, sometimes new books just published —a new biography perhaps, or better still a book of travel—but often old friends, which he is reading again perhaps for the fifth or sixth time.

I was fortunate enough to meet a short time ago someone who was in the process of putting Mr. Lloyd George's library in order, and I was told that the number of books he has collected is remarkable. And they are books which have been read and re-read, and by Mr. Lloyd George himself, for his familiar pencil-marks appear to record the fact. Grote, Gibbon, Mommsen, Macaulay, Froude, Green, Bagehot—these well-worn volumes have been his companions for many years, and he constantly refers to them. Carlyle, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Smollett, Fielding, Sterne, are familiar friends to him, and of the more modern authors his favourites

The Prime Minister

are perhaps Meredith, Stevenson and Wells ; but Mr. Bernard Shaw would probably learn with surprise—but not disapproval—that Mr. Lloyd George has read every one of his books as they appeared, with the intensest interest. “ He loathes me, but I like his books,” was his comment on G.B.S., whose talent he admires greatly. “ Bernard Shaw is nearly as clever as he thinks he is—and that is putting it rather high,” he once remarked.

He has dipped, too, into the classics, not in the originals of course, for that he does not aspire to, but in translations. Cicero’s letters he reads over and over again. Thucydides he read from cover to cover for the first time during a long sea voyage, and has since re-read many times. He has read much French literature, both in French and in the translations. Victor Hugo is one of his favourites, and he has read most of the novels of Anatole France. The stories of Erckmann-Chatrian he delights in, and historical novels he prefers above all others.

Last, but not least, his knowledge of the Bible is thorough, and he can give you the chapter and verse of almost any quotation. He

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delights in Bible history and literature, and at school carried off prizes every year for it.

There is no form of relaxation which Mr. Lloyd George enjoys more than a *good* book, except perhaps *good* music. Although he has had no musical education except the training which every Welshman gets in his school, and in his chapel, yet he knows and enjoys good music, and will go a long way to hear it. He has no poses in literature or music. His tastes in this as in everything else are unaffected and natural, and his instinct sure. There is no man who is so completely untouched by the artificialities of civilization.

Much has already been written about his charm. There are many—those who do not approve of him—who regard this as one of the most dangerous things about him—in fact, quite immoral! These people avoid him, and they are right, for he is an arch-wangler. Since he became leader of a Coalition many of his friends in Wales find fault with him, and it was said that on one of his proposed visits to his constituency that they would “put him through it.” “That’s all very well,” was the remark of some-

The Prime Minister

one who heard this. “They say that, but he just faces them with that smile of his, and says one word—‘Fellow-countrymen’—and they go mad over him.”

Perhaps it is his cheerfulness and gaiety that are half the battle. The world loves a smiling face. He often tells of a word of advice which was given to him when a young man, and which he strives to remember in his darkest moments : “Whatever happens, never allow yourself to become sour.”

Britain might have had to finish the war without him, for he very nearly went to Russia with Lord Kitchener, and it was only at the last moment that he was detained here on Irish matters. The facts of the case show that this statement is not mythical or even an over-statement. At the end of April, 1916, the French were so alarmed at the news from Russia that they sent M. Albert Thomas with M. Viviani to Russia to report on the situation there. Before going, M. Thomas came to London and consulted with Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Asquith, on April 28, said he had come to the conclusion that Mr. Lloyd George should go to

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Russia, seeing that the supply of munitions to that country affected the British Government to a large extent. It was suggested that Sir Maurice Hankey should accompany Mr. Lloyd George.

Early in May the Government decided to send a special mission to Russia, and Mr. Lloyd George was asked to go and accepted the task; but later on affairs in Ireland began to assume importance. In the meantime Lord Kitchener had received an invitation from the Tsar to visit Russia. On May 25 Mr. Asquith announced in the House that he had asked Mr. Lloyd George to undertake negotiations to endeavour to obtain an agreement with regard to Irish affairs. On the following day Lord Kitchener accepted the Tsar's invitation and the mission was decided upon. Had not Irish affairs intervened it is therefore certain that Mr. Lloyd George would have accompanied Lord Kitchener—though we cannot help wondering whether his usual luck would have attended him and he would have managed to survive with the help of a raft!

MR. BONAR LAW

II

MR. BONAR LAW (WRITTEN BEFORE HIS RETIREMENT)

MR. BONAR LAW and Mr. Lloyd George are the most perfect political partnership on record. There has never been a breath of jealousy or disloyalty during the years they have had joint charge of the ship of State. They have both given of their best to the country. If Mr. Bonar Law is loyal to Mr. Lloyd George he knows equally well that "L. G." will never let him down, has played the game with him and will never leave him in the lurch. Everything is done in consultation. Neither takes any step before having discussed it with the other. Perfect frankness has bred perfect trust. If Mr. Bonar Law has to endure the taunt that he is playing second fiddle to a Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George has equally to face the sneers of those who say he has "turned Tory" and "is in Mr. Bonar Law's pocket."

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Each knows the difficulties of the other, and each helps the other to rise above them.

Mr. Bonar Law takes a gloomy view of life. He always sees trouble ahead and magnifies it. Indeed, so exaggerated is the gloom that it has become almost a habit and a pose. He knows too that it is a joke with his friends, and with his queer Scotch humour he turns it to account for their amusement. But the gloom is not always assumed. He is by nature easily depressed and inclined to be pessimistic. It is in fact extremely difficult to make him see the bright side of things, and his favourite comment is : “Well, there’s lots of trouble ahead.” I am told that is how he will welcome the Prime Minister on his return from a holiday or a conference, and, strange to say, such is the effect on Mr. Lloyd George that it amuses him so much as to stimulate and exhilarate him.

With such a sombre outlook on life, Mr. Bonar Law must needs be possessed of great courage to enable him to face the difficulties and discouragements of a political career. But courage he has, and it is all the greater because he always fights without hope. Every battle

Mr. Bonar Law

for him is a losing one at the start—a Thermopylæ—but he fights none the less bravely for that. This, combined with sagacity and ability, and a wide experience of political affairs, carries him through. One would have thought that, taking the views he does of the trials and tribulations of the House, and the unhappiness which it appears very often to cause him, he might have retired from politics and led a quiet life. Someone suggested this to him one day when he seemed more depressed and more discouraged than usual by the aspect of the political situation. “Believe me, there is nothing I would like better,” was the reply.

And yet, would he be happy if he did escape from the worries and trials of political life? The secret is that Mr. Bonar Law is a very lonely man. He lost a wife who was very dear to him, he lost two cherished sons during the war, and this latter loss has left him almost broken-hearted. He is not a man who can seek diversion from sorrow in excitement or worldly pleasures or light relaxation of any kind. He has few hobbies or amusements. Bridge and chess he plays perfectly, tennis he still plays

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and finds pleasure in it. But he cannot tolerate "Society," and loathes entertaining and entertainments. The society of women has no charm for him, indeed the pained and unhappy look is enhanced when he finds himself in their presence or even at the prospect of finding himself among them.

He dislikes even taking meals with others. "What is the use of spending a long time over a meal? The smoking comes at the end, and it is the only pleasurable thing about it." So he takes his meals alone. I am told that ten minutes is the average time taken over his lunch. Of course, there are official meals which he must attend, but even then he is unhappy until he can smoke. His pipe is his beloved companion, and he looks least unhappy when he has it in his mouth. Music he does not understand—it is just a painful noise to him. Theatres he cannot tolerate—especially those where no smoking is allowed! When in Paris during the Conference his idea of relaxation was to get someone to play chess with him. Any other sort of amusement, or the prospect of any other kind of entertainment, only made him unhappy.



Photo: Central News.

**Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, Mr. BONAR LAW and
Mr. PHILIP KERR.**

Mr. Bonar Law

One evening, much against his will, he was taken to see a performance of *La Fille de Madame Angot*. When asked how he liked it, his reply was : “ Well, it wouldn’t be so bad if it wasn’t for the singing ! ”

In spite of this dislike of his for society he is really very good company. Even his pessimism is amusing, and he knows it. He is frankly amused at the high spirits of Mr. Lloyd George, although he pretends to become more depressed in proportion as the Prime Minister’s optimism increases. He often scores off the latter in an affectionate manner, pretending in a despairing way that he cannot keep up with the subtleties of his mind—while Mr. Lloyd George assures him that there is no more simple-minded person on earth than himself !

Added to this, his dry caustic repartee is entertaining, and if he chooses he is a brilliant conversationalist. He does not need to raise his voice to be listened to. His slow soft words have great charm, and he has a persuasive manner of talking, and even of looking at you as he talks—his head a little on one side, and his eyes rather pathetically sad. His face is

Makers of the New World

very careworn and rugged, and his hair is turning grey. In appearance he is typically Scottish. He is a tall lean figure. He is rather absent-minded, and very unassuming. He is sensitive, and, for all his quiet bearing and unemotional exterior, feels very deeply.

Though it would take very little to make him lose his grip on life—during the war he very nearly lost it—yet while he remains in political circles he is a great force. His sincerity and honesty and integrity earn for him universal respect and affection, and though he may not be a born leader of men, yet he is one to whom men instinctively turn to be shown the wise, straight road. As Leader of the House of Commons he is incomparable, but he lacks the fire which might have made him leader of a nation during a great crisis. He knows it. He is honest with himself. If anything, he has not sufficient self-confidence. He is the sort of man who is lovable but who will not allow himself to be loved.

His is a very Scotch soul, which no one but a Barrie could describe. Barrie would show you all that “charm” which fascinates in spite of

Mr. Bonar Law

himself, that sad twinkle which is provocative of merriment, the gently lonely spirit which simultaneously provokes and repels sympathy ; and withal the Scottish obstinacy and dourness in a difficult encounter. He would show you these attributes asserting themselves in the politician—the calm persuasive manner exercising its influence over an excited and difficult House of Commons, the shrewdness and acuteness of mind coming to the rescue in dealing with an awkward situation or with awkward men, and winning out in the long run. It is a personality that Barrie would love to deal with, one which he alone could deal with adequately.

MONSIEUR BRIAND

III

MONSIEUR BRIAND

AT the first glance one wonders what there can be in this man to make him four times Prime Minister and the most fascinating man in French politics. There is no surface indication either of the attractiveness or of the intelligence and power with which he is credited. He is supposed to be especially attractive to women, who adore him and lionize him. Why is it? A pale, somewhat haggard face, with a large untidy moustache and great black brows, the latter half concealing sleepy grey eyes, half-closed and suggesting a cat in repose but nevertheless on the alert. His features are irregular, his hair is unkempt, his shoulders are round and his chest is narrow. His general appearance is of an untidy and badly groomed man, with a heavy, frowning, almost sulky face. Such a man fascinating? Absurd.

Makers of the New World

But one understands the enchantment when he becomes interested and animated. His face lights up and a beautiful smile illumines and transfigures the countenance; the sleepy eyes begin to flash fire, and the heavy flabby features become expressive and mobile. One understands when he begins to speak and one hears his beautiful voice—deep, resonant, able to express every emotion and rouse every feeling of which his audience is capable.

M. Briand's voice is his greatest asset. He is a wonderful orator. He does not prepare his speeches in advance, but speaks usually on the spur of the instant. I am told that even when he mounts the tribune he does not know what he is going to say. He trusts not so much to the inspiration as to the need of the moment and to his power of meeting it, to the opportunity which arises and which he takes with amazing readiness. His speeches therefore generally make a great impression at the time, but they have the defects of their qualities and their impressiveness and power are not of an enduring character. His is oratory in the old sense of the term in that it has the power of

Monsieur Briand

stirring the visible assembly. But once that has been achieved the spell weakens and his words do not live to inspire again—nor is that his aim. He does not devote himself in the rostrum to dictating pamphlets or even leading articles : he *speaks*. His oratory is dramatic without being histrionic. His gestures are vivid and lively, but natural.

He is not a great reader—in fact he hardly reads at all—which makes all the more inexplicable the opulence of his vocabulary and the perfection of his style. There is a story of a small conference of seven men, of which M. Briand was one, held during the war. Briand began to talk, and as he warmed to his subject he indulged in all the arts of the great orator addressing an assembly—voice and gesture were animated and infinitely varied. One knows how such a performance is apt to distress a small audience. It is apt to produce painful self-consciousness. It is a tribute to his mastery as an artist that his hearers became enthralled and absorbed as they found themselves listening to a speech that had all the qualities of a great oration. They went away much moved by

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what they had heard, and greatly impressed by Briand's power.

He is a wily politician too, making up for his indolence by a certain amount of craft. One day, for instance, the French Minister Freycinet made a long and well-reasoned statement at a meeting of the Cabinet upon a subject under discussion, but possessing no gifts of oratory the statement made no impression. Others spoke, and at the end of the discussion Briand got up. He made an elaborate and profound speech, which attracted much attention. Freycinet remarked : “What an intelligent fellow he is ! How did he come to make such a brilliant speech on this subject ? ” “ He knew nothing about it when he came here,” was the reply of a colleague, “ but he heard all that an hour ago from you.”

It is interesting to compare him with British politicians. He has much in common with the British Prime Minister, with whom he has always been on excellent terms. Briand, who comes from Brittany, always refers to Mr. Lloyd George and himself as “ *Les deux Bretons*,” for the Bretons and the Welsh claim kinship.

Monsieur Briand

The shape of Briand's head does actually resemble that of Lloyd George's, especially from the back—broad and square and covered with long thick hair. They have to a large extent the same qualities—the same subtleness, the same imagination, the same mental alertness and agility. They both have a great insight into human nature, whether in the mass or the individual. They have the same gift of attaching men to themselves and commanding their service and devotion.

I heard an illustration of that the other day. M. Berthelot, the well-known Quai d'Orsay official, is probably the ablest man in that remarkable bureaucracy which keeps things going in France when one Ministry after another is being knocked over and which really governs France while Parliamentary orators expound their policy. He has served a multitude of masters. All able men, some of them distinguished, not one of them exercised over him the sway which Briand has wielded over him through good and evil report. Clemenceau, who is the most suspicious of all men, has a great dislike of Briand—amongst many other objects of his

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inexhaustible hatred. Knowing Berthelot's partiality for Briand, he looked askance at this formidable and well-informed functionary and refused to consult him on any subject. One day, however, he was obliged to seek his advice on a matter in which Briand had taken a prominent part. Before Berthelot replied to his question he said : " M. Clemenceau, I think I ought to tell you that I am a great personal friend of M. Briand, and that I have an intense admiration for him. This of course will not prevent my doing my duty as a public servant, but I wished to let you know the position." Clemenceau, like the great man he is, appreciated Berthelot's candour, and the latter became henceforth his right-hand man.

M. Briand and Mr. Lloyd George have the same great power of reconciling people who are not quite at one in their opinions. M. Briand is able to reconcile the extremes of French politics, and to bring together Right, Centre, Left, extreme Conservative and Socialist, Catholic and Agnostic to work together under his leadership for the common cause.

But while possessing these qualities in

Photo : Illus. Bineau.

M. BRIAND, Mr. LLOYD GEORGE and MARSHAL FOCH
At the Welsh National Banquet at the Hotel Cecil.



Monsieur Briand

common with his fellow “Breton,” he lacks the latter’s untiring energy and vitality and his capacity for endless work. Briand is a blend of Lloyd George’s mental equipment and the temperament of Mr. Asquith. He is indolent by nature and seems to tire easily of a great task.

There is an amusing story of a conference he had when Prime Minister with Mr. Asquith at the beginning of the war. Briand and his colleagues travelled by night from Paris to London, and Briand, instead of sleeping, insisted upon telling stories and anecdotes during the whole of the journey. Arriving in London in the morning, they proceeded straight to the Foreign Office for a conference which lasted till lunch time. Immediately after lunch they went to 10 Downing Street, to see Mr. Asquith. The latter proceeded to open the conference with a speech, whereon Briand, who was by this time very tired, promptly went to sleep in his chair. Just as Mr. Asquith finished M. Briand awoke, and began to speak in his turn. Whereupon Mr. Asquith leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes and slumbered!

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History does not relate what was the result of the conference.

Briand loves a life of ease, and takes life lazily. They say he will sit for hours alone, smoking and dreaming. He has no interests—music, books, do not appeal to him. “Il n'a besoin de rien,” said one who knew him intimately. Fishing is his only recreation, and he is a great angler. It is just the sort of lazy occupation that would appeal to him, and one can understand how he would quietly wangle the trout from the stream. He lives an extremely simple life. He has a small modest apartment, and his only servant is a daily *femme de ménage* who comes in to clean and tidy up. He has no possessions—not even books. He never reads the newspapers, and his knowledge of affairs and men is gained simply by talking to people. He talks to anyone and everyone. That is his hobby. He talks—and then he dreams—truly a figure reminiscent of the old philosophers, who had such an influence and such a vogue. He never bears a grudge; not even his greatest enemy can excite feelings of animosity in his breast.

Briand has that quality without which a

Monsieur Briand

politician must sooner or later come to grief. He has courage. Like many French politicians he once fought a duel, when he was wounded in the hand. By the way, it may be a matter of some physiological interest that when he was hit in the hand he felt the blow in his shoulder. In the same way Clemenceau, when he was attacked in 1919, was struck in the shoulder by a bullet, but tells how he felt the blow in the region of his kidneys, and felt certain that the bullet had entered there. He added : “There were nine shots, and it seemed such a long time between the first and the last.”

Briand is often called the “*chat bossu*” because of his round shoulders and a certain feline expression on his face, due very largely to the eyes. One might compare him with Lord Robert Cecil, who is the “*chat bossu*” of English politics. But there is a great difference between the two. Briand looks like a well-fed cat slumbering after a meal and quite ready to wait until the next one comes round, when you see him half-opening a sleepy eye to see whether anything is coming his way. Lord Robert Cecil is like a lean and hungry cat, prowling restlessly

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round, here, there, and everywhere for such odds and ends as may be left about. Lord Robert Cecil will never be a great force in politics because he is jumpy, scratchy, and too excitable to make a good mouser. He has also the defect of not realizing the difference between hunting for hate and hunting for food. They are not quite the same thing, and they should never be mixed.

Briand has long been a force to be reckoned with in French politics, whether he is in or out of power. It is a well-known fact now that he and Marshal Foch were the principal agents in the overthrow of Clemenceau. A casual phrase here, dropped when it would ferment; a suggestion planted there, where it would grow; no great apparent activity; the soft, noiseless and indifferent tread of the cat stalking its prey. These are the things which have made him a man to be feared, especially in the unstable world of French politics, where a man may be supreme to-day and forgotten to-morrow, all-powerful one moment, and cast into prison the next; where an idea, a phrase, a rumour will grow and magnify till it assumes menacing proportions,

Monsieur Briand

and finally helps to overthrow the politician against whom it is directed.

Briand has no great party behind him, he stands for no definite policy, he has no definite principles. He is the prince of opportunists. But he has marvellous level-headedness and common sense. He will not sacrifice himself for an idea ; but neither will he sacrifice France for a chimera. He is a lover of the middle course, if he thinks that by taking it he will avert a disaster. But unfortunately the average Frenchman delights in what is known as the "*catastrophe politique*," and for this reason Briand's policy is not always acceptable.

During the war he was in and out of power. His shrewd brain and his oratorical gifts made him particularly valuable in certain crises, but his proneness to personal influences weakened his judgment and his power.

It was in one of Briand's Ministries that Clemenceau served for the first time. The latter was then between sixty and seventy years of age, and had pulled down seventeen Ministries. Briand asked him : " How is it that you have pulled down all these Ministries, and never been

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in a Ministry yourself?" "For the simple reason that I have never been asked," was the reply. "Well, I ask you now," said Briand. And Clemenceau accepted. Briand asked him out of curiosity how he had managed to destroy so many Governments. Clemenceau answered that it was a very simple method; he got the extreme Right and extreme Left to join up and by this means a majority could always be obtained to turn out the Government.

Briand had no great opinion of soldiers and their superiority over politicians in dealing with the conduct of a great war. "War is much too grave a matter to be entrusted to military men," he once said.

One of his favourite stories—and he has many good ones, for he is an excellent raconteur, and socially is most entertaining—concerns General Lyautey. The latter was a great proconsul but a child in politics. He was summoned during Briand's Premiership to appear before the Chamber, which was very anxious to receive explanations as to the military position. Briand asked him what he had to say. Lyautey said: "You leave it to me. I have a surprise in store

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for them." He would not explain to Briand what was the character of the surprise. It turned out to be a defiant admonition to the inquisitive Chamber to mind its own business and leave the soldiers to mind theirs. And Briand continues: "The result was indeed a surprise, but most of all to Lyautey, for the explosion blew him back to Morocco." (But incidentally the detonation brought down the Briand Ministry.)

During one of his Ministries King Edward visited Paris. They spoke of the feeling between France and Germany. King Edward said to Briand: "The French will have trouble again with the Germans, who will try to quarrel with them. But do not forget this: My cousin* is a coward!"

Another story which Briand tells concerns Lord Kitchener. The latter went over to Calais for a conference early in 1916, when Briand was Prime Minister. After the conference was over Briand and Kitchener walked along the shore together. Kitchener looked at the sea and then turned to Briand and said: "I don't like

* The Kaiser

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the sea." "Oh," said Briand, "it is not very rough to-day, and in any case you will soon be across." "That is not what I mean," said Kitchener. "I am afraid of the sea." And he looked again and shuddered. A few months later he was drowned.

PRESIDENT WILSON

IV.

PRESIDENT WILSON*

PERHAPS the figure at the Conference around whom most controversy has raged is President Wilson. Was there ever an idol who so forced attention to his feet of clay? Had he stayed in America they would never have become visible perhaps to the majority of Englishmen, though the Frenchman, with his passion for the verities, had detected them before ever he crossed the Atlantic. Nevertheless the Frenchman, with his native shrewdness, determined to make the most of this idol, for France's war debt lay like a heavy cloud over her, and was not there the possibility that, if handled properly, this great President might sweep it away with a grand gesture, or at any rate waive a part? Was not there too his passion for humanity, and surely there was no country who stood in such need of humanity at that time as France? (They

* At the time this article was written Mr. Wilson was still President of the United States.

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had not yet conceived the possibility that in President Wilson's opinion Germany stood in still greater need of it !)

So the great champion of "the world" was received with open arms though perhaps so far as M. Clemenceau was concerned a little unwillingly, for the old man was not easily taken in, and this talk of the destruction of force, and the setting up of a League of Nations to which even Germany should ultimately be invited, was foreign and repugnant to his nature. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be led to realize that there would have to be some "give and take" in the business of the Peace Conference, and that if France wanted the help of President Wilson she would inevitably have to swallow the League of Nations. And though not approving of this spirit of compromise, the old cynic shrugged his shoulders and agreed to make the best of things and to humour the President-philosopher.

So the democracy of France hailed the democracy of America, only to find that with his democratic principles the President expected



Photo : Central News.

PRESIDENT WILSON
Leaving the Peace Conference in Paris.

President Wilson

at least royal treatment. A beautiful mansion was taken for him, and sentries were placed on duty outside the gates, and inside an armed guard was installed. The railings around the mansion were covered with armoured steel plates as a protection against violent intentions. The Republic's Guards patrolled street and square around the sacred palace. Masses of gendarmes were placed at the corners of the square, with the object of keeping clear the pavement in front of the mansion.

The fact that no one was allowed to walk down the path on the side of the President's house incensed the pedestrians, and there were frequent lively disputes at the street corners between the gendarmes (who I firmly believed sympathized in their hearts with the disturbers of the peace) and irate Parisians who objected to their right of way being taken from them—and by an American! The square along one side of which the mansion faced had been with its garden and shady trees a favourite rendezvous for the nurses of the neighbourhood with their charges, and it was no uncommon occurrence to see a scuffle between the ruffled

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gendarmes and nursemaids armed with perambulators when the latter perceived their right of way taken from them.

In appearance President Wilson was an arresting figure. Tall, erect, and well built, with iron-grey hair and powerful jaw, he could not fail to attract attention. Nevertheless his clothes had a curious appearance of incongruousness, although it was impossible to explain the reason for this, as they were certainly correct in every detail. But there is the man whose clothes belong to him and the man whose clothes do not, and President Wilson was evidently one of the latter.

His features are essentially those of the American Indian—the long thin face, the prominent nose and chin, the high forehead. “Place a feathered headdress on his head, a blanket round his shoulders, and a tomahawk in his hand, and there you have Sitting Bull,” one of his colleagues at the Peace Conference is reported to have said.

There is the public figure who attracts you because of his name, and the public figure who attracts you because of himself. I should say

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Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau were of the latter and President Wilson of the former. Certain it is that although out of curiosity one would be attracted to him, and interested in him, nevertheless a meeting with him left one cold and critical, and perhaps a little contemptuous. Those who belong to the second class sweep away criticism, and instead there is the thrill of an electric current set up by the meeting.

President Wilson has no magnetic power. He seems to live in a world of his own and does not appear to possess the gift of human sympathy which endears a man to the hearts of the people. He has not the "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin." "Seeing people debilitates me," he is reported to have said, and that is perhaps why as a statesman he was doomed to failure. Instead of mixing with the French people on a simple footing, he would go about surrounded by a crowd of secretaries, journalists, and detectives. He was very rarely seen in the public places of Paris and the Parisians resented the aloofness which he showed to their wonderful city. Instead of

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making a point of visiting the devastated areas of France, and becoming personally acquainted with conditions there, week after week went by, and though he talked about it, he never went, until at last the hints in the French Press became so pointed and unmistakable that one Sunday he paid a visit to Rheims.

Now anyone who saw that devoted city after the bombardment and entered the cathedral before the damage began to be repaired, could not fail to realize the agony which Rheims has passed through, and how the hearts of her people must have been torn by the ghastly ravages upon her treasured possession. President Wilson, with a no doubt well-meant intention, proceeded to congratulate the distressed cardinal who showed him round upon the fact that the cathedral had escaped destruction, saying that the damage was not nearly so great as he had anticipated !

As a great honour he was allowed to go to the Chamber of Deputies to address the French Parliament. Many of the former Deputies had given their lives during the war and the seats of these were left vacant and had been draped

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with black—a most impressive sight. President Wilson could not have failed to notice this, and the meaning of it was obvious. Nevertheless he made his speech without a reference to these vacant seats, and, what is more, without a reference to the losses sustained by the French people during the war. Such was his egotism that the gift of sympathy seemed to be entirely lacking.

In the Conference room the President was a great trial to his colleagues. He was full of anecdotes and often interrupted serious business to tell them, which he did with great deliberation. The anecdotes were more or less relevant; they lacked the piquancy and originality of the stories Lincoln used to tell, but many of them were amusing and quite good. They were not, however, pungent enough for Clemenceau's taste, so they rather bored the old man. He would smile at them in a quizzical, puzzled way, like a man who wondered that anybody should have imagined such thin weak-flavoured stuff entertaining.

The Italians never really liked him. To them he always behaved like an annoying

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schoolmaster towards boys when he wants to humour and encourage—patronizing them at the same time. When he smiled, it was the professional grin. To Clemenceau and Lloyd George he was also the schoolmaster—but a schoolmaster greeting the recognized heads of rival establishments, and the grin was at its best friendly and at its worst propitiatory—for these two both possess terrible tongues and when roused have no hesitation in using them. To this President Wilson was fully alive.

It was inevitable that with the best intentions in the world M. Clemenceau should come into collision with this man of the professorial type and manner, this man who dreamed of an age when perfect harmony should reign throughout the world, and who whilst he ranted about the reign of peace was building a challenging new navy to re-enthrone the reign of force.

They often came to grips in the Conference room, these two, the old tiger who still lived in the past of fifty years ago and the professor who hoped to precipitate the millennium by his Fourteen Points. President Wilson would adopt the high moral tone, and deliver a

President Wilson

lecture to Clemenceau on the folly of France in not treating her enemy magnanimously. For instance, Clemenceau wanted France to be given that part of the Saar Valley which had been allotted her in 1814; while President Wilson was against this, suggesting on his part the handing over of the Saar Valley to France for, say, ten years.

To urge his point he demonstrated to Clemenceau the wrongness of insisting upon full payment by Germany for all her crimes. Let him realize, he said, that force was not the supreme factor in the world; that nothing had ever been accomplished by force; that even Napoleon had acknowledged that upon his death-bed. Even though France had been granted this particular boundary line by England in 1814, yet that was a hundred years ago—a very long time in the history of any country. Surely he would not insist upon going back to that? This was the era of right over might, when justice should triumph over force. Might he remind M. Clemenceau of those famous Frenchmen, Rochambeau and Lafayette, who crossed the Atlantic and took up

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swords in America so that their precious ideals of liberty might be safeguarded? M. Clemenceau should think of what “*the world*” would say. . . . And so on, and so on.

Clemenceau heard him all out patiently to the end, and then made his reply. He touched on the subject of force. “M. le President,” he said, “has quoted Napoleon as saying on his death-bed that force never accomplished anything. Wasn’t it rather late for him to have found that out? And when he discovered it, as he imagined, it was not true. As for those gallant Frenchmen Rochambeau and Lafayette, he would remind the President that they resorted to *force* in order to defend their ideals. M. le President seemed to forget that it was by force that the United States had come into being, and by force that their existence had been ensured. M. le President also referred to 1814, and said that a hundred years was a very long time in a country’s history. The United States is a great country—perhaps the greatest country in the world—but a hundred years is a very long time in its history.”

To all the conferences the President carried

President Wilson

about with him a little typewriter which he would himself manipulate when he wanted to write a letter or memorandum. For instance, one day when the Conference was sitting there was the usual crowd outside in the ante-chamber awaiting the order of the great men inside. Suddenly the doors were flung open and an excitable official came out and called for "the typewriter of President Wilson." There was a stir amongst the pressmen around, and everyone looked out to see the beautiful maiden trip forward who had the privilege of taking down President Wilson's immortal orations. Instead of which a messenger appeared carrying a small typewriting machine, as a duke carries the sword before the royal procession and it is borne into the dread chamber of high council.

Nevertheless, although there were occasional passages of arms between M. Clemenceau and the President, and, be it said, between Mr. Lloyd George and the President too (we will not speak of the Italian Prime Minister and President Wilson: Fiume remains to this day a monument to the discord which was begotten in Paris between these two)—still, in the end,

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it is known that the two Prime Ministers conceived a genuine admiration for the President, in spite of the fact that they had been prepared (to a large extent by the efforts of a certain section of the Press) to regard him as an enemy. They could not but admire his strength of character, which enabled him to enforce a League of Nations upon the greater part of the world when time has shown that he could not persuade his own country to accept it. He may have lacked tact and *savoir faire* and a knowledge of human beings and human nature, but he had the strength of certain purpose and a dominating will. Under a cold and almost hard exterior he was impulsive, impetuous and impatient.

It was these qualities which led him into trouble over Fiume. He had promised Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau not to publish his famous letter to "the world" about Fiume for three hours. But it had been circulated to the Press two hours before this time was up. He kept his promise in the letter, but not in the spirit. So that when at the end of the three hours Mr. Lloyd George, working

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against time to avoid what he saw would be a tragedy, had accomplished what he considered to be a compromise, he discovered that the letter was already about to be published and that it was too late to attempt to withdraw it.

Had the President waited it might have been possible to settle the whole question without such a disastrous schism. His impatience, together with a certain amount of arrogance, brought about an impossible situation, and forced the Italians to leave the Conference. One would have thought that he would have tried every means to avoid a rupture. But he had penned a great document to the heart of the Italian people. This must not be lost to the world, and so pride of authorship triumphed over prudence. To take the smallest view of the incident one would think that, having written the letter, he could not bear that it should not reach the light of day, and was determined that it should be published at all costs.

In a man like President Wilson obstinacy is often mistaken for strength of mind. For

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instance, was it strength of mind that led him to put the League of Nations before all other things at the Peace Conference, so that he refused to discuss anything but that for the first whole month, and matters of urgent and vital importance were kept waiting until the Allies had, willingly or unwillingly, adopted this child which had, to the minds of many, been brought into the world prematurely? In order that the President should take any interest in the rest of the proceedings of the Peace Conference, it was necessary that they should all hang upon the League of Nations. A frail and ailing infant, its birth nevertheless had been proclaimed and insisted upon with such triumphant acclaim that no wonder such superhuman efforts were put forward to keep it alive. But it is not the child it was hoped to be, and it is still doubtful whether, coaxed and nourished by patent foods and artificial nourishment, it will develop into a normal and healthy adult, capable of performing any useful work. Still, the fond father, blind in his adoration, as fond fathers will be, took his offspring round to his friends and Allies, and insisted that, before he discussed

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other matters with them, they should stand as sponsors to it, and, in addition to taking a kindly interest in it, should be responsible for its welfare and proper upbringing. And as they were very anxious to discuss other matters with him, and as indeed it was vital to the needs of the poor tortured world that his attention *should* be attracted to these other matters, they agreed to stand as godfathers, and, being honest men, took a real and sincere interest in the progeny, and have since endeavoured to carry out their obligations in this direction. Now, however, it seems as though the quondam proud and fussy parent has lost interest in his child; indeed, his people at home whisper and hint that the offspring was not legitimate, and therefore they say they will have nothing at all to do with it. It shall not bear their name, they do not like it, and they will contribute not a penny towards its support. If others care to look after it and bring it up, they are entitled to do it, but so far as they are concerned it may perish before they will lift a hand to save it. Thus for the time being the unfortunate sponsors have it on their hands. Having promised to look after it

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they do not like to disown it, at any rate just yet, so they are doing their duty and paying for its upbringing in the fond hope that eventually it will become self-supporting and perhaps repay them for their care. But with all the disputes and unpleasantness that have arisen over its right to be there at all, in addition to the fact that it is far from being a healthy child, it looks as though the poor thing might have a trying and troubled existence.

The League of Nations is the inevitable product of a mind that, like President Wilson's, is essentially idealistic, and finds itself for a space of time in a position of extraordinary power. His is a mind typically American, which blends idealism with self-confidence to such an extent that it is difficult for us of a shyer and more reserved temperament to distinguish between what is genuine and what is humbug—what is good, and what is sheer nonsense—where the desire for the betterment of humanity ends, and the mere selfish trumpet-blowing and advertising part of it begins. There is no doubt that in the American mind there are these two very largely developed, and coming inevitably into

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contact with each other. This clumsy idealist, then, carried his projects through with sheer force—to a point. But being without the knowledge of the psychology not only of individuals but of nations, there came a time when, because he had not taken these factors into account, there was bound to be a false step. That is the difference between a professor and a statesman. He made this mistake with his own opponents at home. He might, had he chosen to act as a statesman and a diplomat, have secured little by little their consent and support for the League of Nations. It required a little coaxing and persuasion, a little patience and tact, a little unbending on his part towards his opponents. But his arrogance and his impetuosity dominated, and he preferred to ride over his enemies with contempt, and treat them as if they were of no account. The consequence was that a powerful resistance was created in America, which has succeeded in defeating and bringing to naught the whole of this great scheme.

Another instance of this curious mixture of arrogance and idealism which trod like a hob-

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nailed boot upon the finer senses, was a speech which he made in the Conference in which he defended the League of Nations and explained all that it intended to do for humanity. He compared it with the Christian faith—the rock upon which humanity had had to rely up to the present. But he explained that Christianity had been a failure because its Founder had not studied sufficiently the practical side of things. Now the League of Nations was going to be an improvement on this, for here was a spiritual code much more in keeping with the needs of mankind, one in which the practical difficulties had been foreseen and provided against and one which was therefore much more practicable and workable. “The world” would see that this was going to succeed where Christianity had failed, i.e. that President Wilson would supply the deficiencies of Jesus Christ. One can only think that on this occasion he was led on to say more than he meant, or to express himself in an unfortunate way. At any rate he must have seen that, to say the least of it, what he had said was in bad taste, for it is reported that it was subsequently

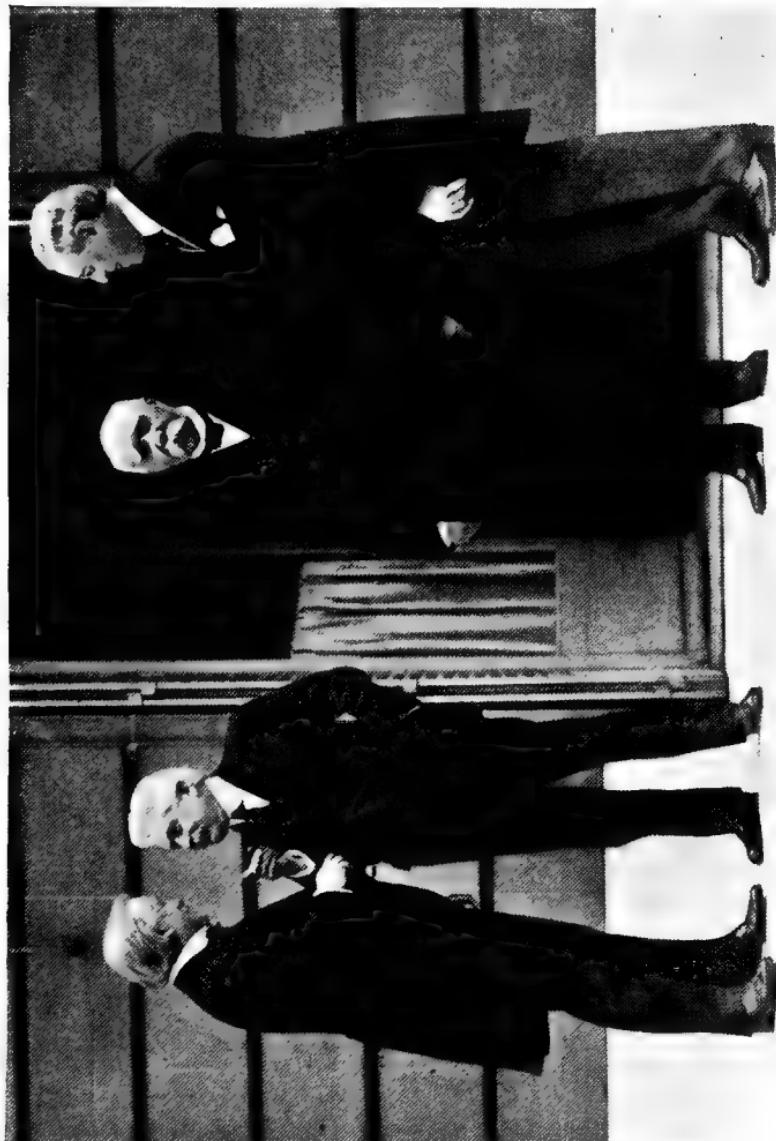


Photo: Topical.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, SIGNOR ORLANDO, M. CLEMENCEAU and
PRESIDENT WILSON

Council of Four of the Peace Conference.

President Wilson

deleted from the reports of the Conference proceedings at his own request. One who was present at nearly all the meetings of the Peace Conference has said : " I have heard President Wilson speak very many times. I have heard him say many lofty things, but never anything great. I have heard him speak in an uplifted manner, but never with any trace of grandeur."

President Wilson is now a pathetic figure. There is no doubt that his breakdown was very largely due to the overstrain imposed upon him at the Peace Conference. Accustomed as he had been to sit aloof from the crowd, to see few people and to make his plans in solitude, he suddenly found himself flung into a clamouring world, and perhaps for the first time in his life—at any rate for many years—came to grips with realities. He found that there were many questions awaiting settlement besides the affairs of the United States. There were so many people to be seen, so many facts to be mastered. And as is always the case when a man just misses greatness, he was unable to delegate the work to others, but attempted to do it entirely

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by himself. He consulted no one. Not even Lansing was admitted to his counsels, and was certainly never present at any of the conferences that mattered—those of the Big Four. President Wilson's detectives probably knew more of what was passing than did Lansing, for they at any rate came each day to the ante-chamber and remained there during the proceedings in the Conference room. He might have been the President's little dog but for the fact that he was never patted!—and always left at home!

In Paris, too, President Wilson's habits became changed. In America he had played golf every day and it was his regular custom to visit a place of amusement twice a week. In Paris he never played golf, never went to a place of entertainment. (The rumour was that he was afraid of personal violence after the attempt on Clemenceau's life, and for that reason avoided public places.)

The task was too much for him, for in addition to its magnitude there was the fact that he had not a united nation behind him at home. He ought to have done one of two

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things—either he should have stayed in America and not attempted to take part personally in the Peace Conference, or he should have come as the delegate of a coalition—not of a Party.

FOCH

V

FOCH

IT can hardly be said that Foch is one of the discoveries of the war, for long before that he was well known as a soldier, and had written a famous book on strategy and tactics. But in France Joffre, Pétain and Nivelle all had their chances as Commander-in-Chief before the time of Foch came. For one reason or another they were all superseded and Foch at last was placed in command of the French forces.

It is well known that Mr. Lloyd George had admired him from the beginning of the war. He met him in 1914 and formed an exalted estimate of his capacity, and in his mind had for a long time set him apart as a soldier with a genius for war. That is why, at Rapallo in 1917, he gave concrete form to the plan which had gradually evolved itself in his mind: that of placing Foch in supreme command of the Allied armies. It is a matter of history

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now how this plan was fought against for more than a year by military, Press, and political faction, and how Mr. Lloyd George had to be content for the time with the setting-up of an Inter-Allied Council at Versailles, with Foch as Chief Director. It was certainly a step on the right road, but it failed to place the final word of command in the power of a single man.

It was not till the Allied armies were on the brink of disaster in 1918 that in desperation, and at the eleventh hour, Foch was placed in supreme command. A terrible moment for a man to have to show his worth—hardly a fair test, one might have thought—but it was not a time when any patriot could refuse the responsibility. Nor did Foch desire to refuse it. He was content to accept the terrible responsibility which the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies placed upon him. “Who was I before this?” he exclaimed. “Monsieur Foch! Très bien connu, mais toujours Monsieur Foch.” When asked in April, 1918, when the odds seemed overwhelmingly against the Allies and the Germans were pressing us back, which hand he would choose if he were

Foch

able, his own or Ludendorff's, his reply was : "I would rather be Foch." This shows the complete confidence he had in the ultimate vindication of his own strategy. His faith is such that it enabled him to believe that men can influence events instead of being influenced by them. Thus he never doubted the ultimate success of the Allied Armies. Throughout the whole of that anxious time he never lost his appetite nor a single night's sleep. More than that, he never took a decision late at night for fear that it would disturb his rest.

One look at his face makes you realize the confidence which will overcome all difficulties. That wonderfully brilliant and steady eye, with its rare smile, looks straight ahead to the goal, and does not dream of failure. That rugged face, which can look so kind on occasions, has a sternness of purpose accentuated by the firm square chin which would put dread into the heart of an enemy. Purpose is stamped in every line—and after the grimness of the war, can one wonder that there are many such lines? Even the elementary methods of the soldiers of olden times for terrifying their enemies are

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called in to give an added ferocity to his countenance, for his big moustache contributes to this effect.

Not that fierceness is the outstanding characteristic of Marshal Foch. He is a curious combination of great gentleness and sternness, and it is not surprising that the strain of the war should have accentuated the latter. But there is no brusqueness, no bluster, no terrifying tones, and although the gestures are expressive and vigorous, they are not menacing. He has great dignity of carriage, his manner is quietly impressive. His whole personality radiates strength, but it is the strength of one who believes not so much in himself as in something greater than himself.

This great Marshal is fortunate in having the *appearance* of a hero. He is indeed "every inch a soldier." You have but to see him to recognize his greatness. Genius radiates from that great brow, from those wonderful quelling eyes, from the stately set of the head upon the broad shoulders. He appears taller than he is, possibly because of the dignity of his carriage. He is a great man with a great heart, and,

Foch

above all, a patriot. But he is not the man to desire fame. He is shy of compliments, shy of demonstrations. He is essentially a very simple man. His very strategy is simple. He issues no flamboyant declarations. His orders are brief and to the point. “*Ne bougez pas*” was his command at Abbeville in April, 1918; “*Ne lachez pas le pied*,” on another occasion when the Allies were hard pressed, but could not afford to give way an inch.

In 1918, when Amiens was in danger, and the Germans within a day’s march of that town, it was suggested that the British should evacuate Amiens and retire to a line farther back. Foch’s reply was: “*I will fight before Amiens: I will fight in Amiens: I will fight behind Amiens!*”

He himself is a man of very simple tastes —indeed, the salary of a French Field-Marshal does not enable anyone to lead an extravagant life. But he is not the man for display. During the war he might have surrounded himself with all the pomp and circumstance of a Commander-in-Chief. He chose to live very simply, making his headquarters in an unimposing house with a very limited staff. He did

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not seek to issue his orders from a palace or a château—the only question he would ask when choosing his headquarters was whether there was “chauffage centrale.”

His only companion on many important occasions was General Weygand, his devoted Chief of the Staff, a most remarkable character. A little, dapper man, with a bird-like face and the most piercing of brown eyes, he was Foch’s *alter ego*. While Foch decided the strategy and tactics, Weygand prepared the details—the numbers of troops, the disposition of the regiments. He carried no papers, he consulted no department. He had in that wonderfully retentive brain of his, carefully tabulated and ready to be summoned to Foch’s assistance, all the data which any department of the War Office could be expected to supply; and the two of them together would work out their plans—no armies of secretaries and aides-de-camp—no ostentatious summoning of a Council of War—no ceremony, no glitter. There was no general, there was no brigadier-general, with a smaller retinue than the Commander-in-Chief, who had five millions of men



Photo : Central News.

MARSHAL FOCH.

Foch

under his command—the largest army ever commanded in history by one man—even by Xerxes.

An instance of the delight which Marshal Foch takes in simple things is the pleasure which he derived from learning to smoke a pipe. It was Sir Henry Wilson who first initiated him into the mysteries in 1918. Foch had been in the habit of smoking very cheap cigars—the sort of thing that would be termed here a “two-penny smoke”—and Sir Henry Wilson gave him an English pipe. Foch applied himself with as much energy and concentration to mastering it as if it had been a great attack on a German position. When Sir Henry Wilson went to see him in the middle of a great battle, he found Foch struggling with his pipe, the floor littered with spent matches. He had not yet overcome it, and it was a great source of worry to him for some weeks.

In June, 1918, when things were going very badly for the Allies, a War Council was held at Versailles and conducted to the accompaniment of the roar of the German guns, which were at that time within forty miles of Paris. The

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French line had been broken and things looked very black. Foch had been heard to say that that was the worst moment he had passed through. The old veteran withdrew from the rest of the company, and was presently seen bending down with his head shaking convulsively over his hands. Everyone thought he had broken down, and someone approached him to comfort him. But on nearing him they were reassured to find that his worry came from a most desperate attempt to make his pipe draw!

But it is this very simplicity which gives him an added nobility. He is a man of the people, but he can take his place anywhere. He is as much at his ease with the highest in the land as with the humblest peasant, and equally courteous in dealing with both. He has no mannerisms, unless it be a wealth of gesture when he talks. Gestures are usually used to supplement speech, but with Foch his words are the supplements to his gestures. There is a famous lecture of his in which he expounded his tactics in preparing an attack against the enemy. The illustration was carried out by a series of gestures, Foch first of all stretching out his right hand like a parrot

Foch

and fastening it in a claw-like manner upon an imaginary object—the enemy's flank. Then he proceeded to do the same thing with his left hand, until he held fast the enemy's other flank. Then he thrust his head forward as a parrot does when it bites, and repeated this several times, after the manner of that bird. His sole observation was : “ *Le perroquet est un animal subtil.* ” (The parrot is a subtle animal.) But his listeners knew what the analogy was.

In the same way, when asked in the summer of 1918 what his plan was for launching an attack against the Germans, his reply was to give a series of punches with his arms against an imaginary enemy, kicking with his legs at the same time. It was the best illustration of what his tactics actually were, for when he did attack, he hit the Germans here, there and everywhere, with all his resources and without pause or respite. It is part of his strategy when things are bad and the odds are overwhelming, to *attack*. During the Battle of the Marne he scribbled a note in pencil to Joffre : “ *My right flank is retreating ; my centre is exhausted ; my left flank is hesitating ; therefore I attack !* ”

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There was no doubt, therefore, when Foch took the reins of command into his hands what the fate of the enemy would be. The Germans say that Foch was lucky. Most people would have declined the "luck" of being made Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies at the most perilous moment of the war. It was the "luck" of genius which enabled him to make good. There were no two plans of action in Foch's mind. He knew exactly how long he would continue to withdraw, exactly at what point and moment he would make his attack. He was never in any doubt as to his strategy, he was never in any doubt as to the ultimate result. He was single-minded in aim and method, nor would he allow anything to stand between him and his duty. During the war he lost his son, and when they told him the news someone approached him with words of consolation. He swept them aside with a magnificent gesture. "No!" he commanded. "Speak to me of it *after the war.*"

MR. BALFOUR

VI

MR. BALFOUR

A LONG, thin, rather graceful and willowy figure; a noble head, with beautiful silvery hair brushed back from a high brow, and giving a benign look to his countenance; dreamy blue eyes with a far-away look, enhanced by his glasses and still more by a curious way he has of walking with his chin in the air. Mr. Balfour, this venerable figure, pursues his detached way through politics, retaining his influence while appearing to be altogether unconscious of it. His air hovers alternately between the paternal and the boyish, for his turned-down collar and large tie give him something of a youthful appearance, and he is as gentle as a small child. His mouth is firm and frank, and he has a beautiful rare smile. His complexion is fresh and his voice is clear and strong. You would scarcely believe that his age is seventy-three. He is still agile and active in spite of his years,

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with lithe form and springing step. He plays tennis with vigour, and there is no sign, either physically or mentally, that old age has laid hands upon him.

His intellect is a towering one, and for this reason during the war and since, he was called in to lend the weight of his brilliant mind to Government councils. There is no other like him for weighing up the for and against, for presenting an impartial view of both sides of an argument. His mind is that of the philosopher, utterly detached. But he lives in the realms of thought, and is not a man of action.

Realizing this, one can understand why it is that his success in the sphere of politics has never been in proportion to the brilliance of his efforts. Politics is the instrument by which his love of argument is indulged. Apart from the opportunities which political life offers him in this respect, it is doubtful whether it would have had much attraction for him. To express a point of view, to bring an argument to bear upon any theme, at any time, is a delight to him. He will embark upon it with readiness at any moment, and at the shortest possible notice.



Photo : Central News.

Mr. ARTHUR J. BALFOUR.

Mr. Balfour

But to feel strongly enough to be able to translate one side of the argument into action, and successful action, this he has never been able to do. To take the lead in a battle, and win through to victory, that has never been his achievement, nor indeed his desire. It was Clemenceau who, with supreme irony, after Balfour had been holding forth with admirable impartiality for twenty minutes upon a point under discussion, looked at him perplexedly when he ceased speaking, and said : “ C'est fini ? Mais—are you for, or are you against ? ”

That sums up Mr. Balfour's attitude towards life, towards politics, towards humanity. “ Is he for, or is he against ? ” No one knows, least of all himself. Decisions do not interest him. They can be left to others, who will take them for him, together with the responsibility for them. In an argument he is incomparable ; when it is a question of taking action, it is a different matter. He is essentially a dreamer—a type that belongs not to this age, but to all ages—in fact rather to all other ages but this. His reason for never reading the newspapers is a characteristic one. “ News is either important

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or unimportant," he argued; "if it is unimportant I don't want to know it; if it is important someone is sure to tell me about it."

I am told that the most amusing scene occurred on Mr. Balfour's first introduction to a jazz band. He simply did not understand it. To him its purpose even was quite unintelligible. He got nearer and nearer in his desire to analyse this extraordinary noise, and the sight of Mr. Balfour, a solitary figure standing with his hands thrust deep into his pockets and contemplating the performers as though they were strange animals, put a stop to the dancing for the time being.

It is said that Mr. Balfour would arrive at a meeting of the Peace Conference in Paris, settle himself in his chair, shut his eyes, and to all appearances go fast asleep. About ten minutes before the Conference ended he would wake up and, according to the Frenchman who was present, "make a charming speech contradicting everything everyone had said."

Real music has no more ardent lover than Mr. Balfour. Besides being naturally musical, he has great technical knowledge, and it is a

Mr. Balfour

favourite recreation with him. He is fond of Society and loves good company, and in former days his presence was indispensable to a brilliant function. He loves too the society of beautiful women—but they must be brilliant and cultured too.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, his aloofness is such that in the midst of a gay throng he often appears as detached as a solitary poplar from the surrounding landscape. He is a great gentleman. His manners are quite perfect, and his courtesy is of the delightful kind which is apt to be called “old-fashioned” nowadays. He draws no distinction between the highest lady and the humblest typist.

But with all his courteousness and consideration, they say that at heart he is hard as steel. “His excessive courtliness and good manners have been given him instead of a heart,” said one who knew him well. This may well be. The things that he cares for are not things of the heart, but rather things of the mind.

MR. HUGHES

VII

MR. HUGHES

No country was more typically represented at the Peace Conference than Australia. William Hughes, born in the hills of Montgomeryshire, brought with him all the fire of his native land, together with the strength and vigour with which Australia seems to endow her adopted children. A small figure, thin and wiry, with a stoop which is almost a crouch, he has a queer way of holding his head strongly—and appropriately—suggestive of a kangaroo. His long, thin face is rugged and furrowed with lines, his features are big and his eyes are keen and penetrating.

He has one physical affliction—that of deafness—but his stubborn and fearless nature has triumphed over this with characteristic courage. His unyielding spirit has dominated over his frail body in such a way that infirmity is no

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longer a hindrance but becomes almost an attraction. Owing to his deafness his voice is loud and raucous, but this too has tended to become an amiable characteristic instead of a drawback.

Hughes's personality is as insistent as his voice. At the Peace Conference he knew no compromise—but this was probably because his responsibility for the harmonious working of the Conference was not great. At home in the political arena of Australia he may have more use for the arts of his brother Welshman at the Conference, for with a majority that may at any time become a minority one has to be diplomatic. Nevertheless at the Paris Conference he remained throughout the uncompromising representative of Australia.

It must have been an interesting spectacle to see him in conflict with President Wilson, the two of them representing such different continents, with such different points of view. Hughes, typical of the young country which must depend upon force, upon vigorous action for its growth and development; Wilson, at the other extreme of civilization, preaching the dis-



Photo : Illus. Bureau.

Mr. HUGHES (Right) and SIR JOSEPH WARD
Leaving the St. Germain Conference.

Mr. Hughes

appearance of force from the world and the advent of a reign of meekness and right.

Upon one point—that of the Mandate for Papua—they came into direct and angry opposition. Hughes would not give way. Wilson, having exhausted his other arguments, embarked upon a discourse in the high and lofty tone which he frequently adopted in dealing with recalcitrant nationalities. “Come, come, Mr. Hughes,” he urged. “Do you mean to tell me that if you have Australia taking one side, and the whole of the civilized world on the other, you will persist in urging the claim of Australia against that of the civilized world?” Hughes’s reply came in slow and measured accents: “Well, Mr. President, that’s about it,” he said.

Hughes and M. Clemenceau were the best of friends. They seemed to understand each other. Clemenceau appreciated Hughes’s sense of humour, while Hughes respected the old man’s grit and determination. Clemenceau would often tease Hughes upon the remote continent from which he came, and would pretend to take a deep interest in the habits

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and customs of the people of Australia, as though they were inhabitants of another planet. "Mr. Hughes," he said one day with a serious face, "they tell me that in your early life you were a cannibal?" "I can assure you, M. Clemenceau," was the prompt and equally serious reply, "that that story is grossly exaggerated."

MONSIEUR CLEMENCEAU

VIII

MONSIEUR CLEMENCEAU

IF Foch is a heroic figure Clemenceau is a classic one. Here was a man of destiny, one who all his life had been fighting, fighting with his brains and with his bitter tongue, to pull down his enemies. Now he had been raised to the supreme position to pull down *France's* enemies. They call him "The Tiger," and the name does not so much describe his appearance as his character. No epithet could be more appropriate. All through his life he has been a man-eating tiger : he has borne down, clawed, and destroyed one French statesman after another and one group of French Ministers after another. For forty years he has been the terror of the French political jungle. At the first glance you see an old man, looking as though he carried many cares and had been all his life at grips with things. Ill-clothed and rather stout, his hands, which are attacked by eczema, always encased

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in suède gloves, his appearance at any rate is far from heroic. His head is very bald, his nose is rather large and flat, he has a heavy white drooping moustache, and his skin is sallow.

You forget all this, however, when you look at his eyes. Brown, under heavy brows, their prevailing expression is one of sadness—almost of suffering. They have the look of dumb pleading which you see in the eyes of a dog. But they are not sympathetic, these piercing, sad brown eyes : they are the eyes of the cynic, whose vision has pierced life to the quick, who has no illusions, no tender remembrances, who has ceased to rely upon mankind for help or sympathy ; of one who, fighting all his life alone, against great odds, still finds himself at the end of it alone, and still fighting.

“ My wife was unfaithful to me ; my children have left me ; my friends have deserted me—but I have still got my teeth ! ”

This savage outburst of his represents his attitude towards life and mankind. He lives alone on the meagre sum of 12,000 francs a year, in a tiny house, with one servant. He never entertains, never dines out, goes to bed

Monsieur Clemenceau

at an early hour, and rises equally early. When he was Prime Minister his colleagues were frequently roused from their slumbers in the early morning hours with messages from their Chief, who was already up and at work. When asked why he lived so, he said, “I prefer to be alone. When I am by myself I can scold my servant, if everything is not as I like it. I can grumble and be cross, and she does not complain because she knows my ways.” There is something pathetic about this passionate love for solitude on the part of an aged man. It is as if he had tried everything life has to offer and found it wanting—the same instinct perhaps which would have driven a more religious man to a monastery.

One might even say that he has little use for friends and does not understand friendship. His colleagues in his Government did not escape his sarcasm. When they provoked him he would turn on them with all the tigerish ferocity which earned him his name and rend them until they cowered before him. Once, having been annoyed by the action of one of the members of his Cabinet who belonged to the Hebrew faith, “Mon Dieu,” he cried, “there is only one Jew

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in France who does not understand finance, and he is my Finance Minister!" Poor M. Pichon, who was the victim of Clemenceau's terrible tongue throughout the Peace Conference, once ventured to protest at the treatment he was receiving. Whereupon Clemenceau turned upon him and asked: "What is the use of being my friend if I cannot scold you?"

When the Germans drew nearer Paris in 1914, and the bombardment and even the occupation of that city seemed more and more imminent, it was suggested to him that it might be desirable for the Government and Parliament to leave the city. "Yes, I think you are right," was Clemenceau's reply, "we are not near enough to the front." But his patriotism was not always expressed thus in terms of cynicism. When it seemed as though Paris might fall to the Germans in 1918, he said, "The building of Paris was a glory. It will be a glory for her to be destroyed to save the liberties of France."

He was merciless and scathing even to his own colleagues. When Caillaux was his Finance Minister in his first Premiership an amusing



Photo : Central News.

M. CLEMENCEAU
Leaving a meeting of the Conference.

Monsieur Clemenceau

episode occurred which showed how unbridled the Clemenceau tongue can be. Caillaux had lost all his hair excepting a small fringe on the outer edge. One day, at a Cabinet Council, in the midst of a heated argument, Caillaux rose and said he must leave as he had to attend a Committee of the Chamber. Exasperated, Clemenceau called out to him as Caillaux's bald head was departing : “ Allez, donc, avec vos quarante cheveux ! ”

This reminds one of Clemenceau's action many years after which is characteristic of his ruthless nature. When he became Premier in 1918, it was this very man—his old Finance Minister—whom he prosecuted with relentless purpose and eventually threw into prison. It is an illustration of his indifference to old friendships and associations. During his last Premiership he was always having trouble with Poincaré. Poincaré would send for him on the slightest pretext and would want to know the explanation of this or that. It is reported that having returned to the Peace Conference after one of these interviews, he turned to Mr. Lloyd George, threw up his hands with a gesture of

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despair, and said in a loud aside : “ Can’t you lend me George V ? ” It was perhaps after this that Mr. Lloyd George said paradoxically of him : “ He loves France and hates all Frenchmen.” During the Peace Conference Clemenceau was bombarded by notes and letters ; he would brush them aside, saying : “ Take them away ; I know what is in them.”

It was about this time that someone suggested to Clemenceau that “ Poincaré ” meant in English “ square fist ” (*poing carré*). “ Not at all ! ” was Clemenceau’s reply. “ I will tell you what it means : *point*—not, and *carré*—‘ square ’—it means ‘ not square . ’ ”

For Deschanel, the late President of the Republic, he had supreme contempt, and he made no attempt to conceal it. When told that Deschanel came to fall from the train because he was leaning out of the window and overbalanced himself, Clemenceau exclaimed : “ That is impossible, his head is too light.”

His colleagues at the Peace Conference, too, were often the objects of his pleasantries and his sarcasm. Hymans, the Belgian Foreign Minister, is said to have found it impossible to do

Monsieur Clemenceau

business with Clemenceau. “He loses his temper so quickly,” the former complained, “and then breaks into torrents of Parisian slang which I cannot understand.” Clemenceau on his side could not tolerate Hymans, whose impassioned and almost hysterical speeches only roused his anger and contempt. On one occasion when he had delivered an oration even more painful than usual, Clemenceau approached him at the close of the Conference, and said to him : “M. Hymans, there is one great service you can do for your country.” M. Hymans beamed. At last, he thought, he had made an impression upon the old man. “What is that, M. Clemenceau?” he asked. “Commit suicide!” was the reply.

Often there were pleasant jokes cracked in the presence of the victims of his wit. Taking hold of Wilson by the revers of his coat—a favourite trick of Clemenceau’s—one day when there had been a long argument about the mandate for Constantinople : “My friend,” he said, “I know what we will do—we will make you Sultan of Constantinople!” And of Balfour : “Your Balfour,” he said in Balfour’s presence

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turning to some of the latter's colleagues, "he amuses me so much. During the conference he sleeps and we talk. Then suddenly he awakes, fixes his eye upon a fly on the ceiling, and says: 'Methinks it seems' and talks about something quite different from what we were discussing." It was inevitable that President Wilson should come in for a great deal of it, nor did Clemenceau ever miss a good opportunity. Keynes in his book said that Clemenceau himself slept while President Wilson talked. Clemenceau's remark on this is said to have been: "It would have been better for President Wilson, and for the Peace Treaty too, if he had slept instead of talking."

Towards the end of the war President Wilson, though he refused to send a person of authority to the meetings of the Supreme Council and to take any part in the discussions and decisions, nevertheless insisted upon sending someone there to take notes. This Clemenceau considered to be the height of insolence—as indeed it was. The first time he perceived the stranger he asked who he was, and was told in reply that he was taking notes for President

Monsieur Clemenceau

Wilson. "Taking notes for President Wilson!" exclaimed the old man furiously. "No doubt the Kaiser would also like to send a shorthand-writer to these meetings!"

As was to be expected, Clemenceau had no great opinion of Wilson's politics or of his ideals. "Fourteen points!" he exclaimed. "Why, the good God himself could only think of ten!"

That Clemenceau's admiration for the President was distinctly qualified is shown by his reply to someone who asked him what he thought of Wilson. "Well," was the reply, "I don't think he is a bad man, but I have not yet made up my mind as to how much of him is good."

You feel sorry for this lonely old man until you begin to be afraid of him. For through the haunting sadness of that look is the undaunted challenge of the warrior. Woe to the man who elects to cross swords with Clemenceau! He has actually fought a number of duels and is said to be a first-rate swordsman. M. Deschanel and he have been lifelong enemies. Their enmity many years ago culminated in a duel brought about by Clemenceau's virulent attacks. Swords were chosen and the duel took place in a

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garden in the suburbs. The story goes that M. Deschanel, pushed by the edge of Clemenceau's rapier, receded farther and farther until Clemenceau tucked his sword under his arm, and with a low bow said to his opponent, “Monsieur is preparing to leave us?” (*Monsieur nous quitte?*)

He has a will of iron—he can be ruthless and unbending even with himself. He tells the story of how, twenty-five years ago, he would sometimes smoke forty or fifty cigars a day. Feeling unwell, and going to consult a doctor, the latter said that unless he gave up smoking so excessively he was a doomed man. He was advised to cut his daily cigar ration to half a dozen, but Clemenceau decided it was easier to give up the habit altogether. He therefore placed a box of his best cigars open upon his desk. For a fortnight he sat and worked every day with the box open in front of him and did not take one. It was a terrible ordeal, he said, but he survived it and has not wanted to smoke since. This incident is very characteristic of the drastic methods which he adopts towards himself as towards others.

The stories of his cynical agnosticism are

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many. Most people must have heard how when he was recovering from his wound in 1918 his nurse, who was a nun, showed him great devotion. Being distressed at his unbelief she tried to convert him to the Catholic faith and begged him as soon as he got better to go to a priest to confess and obtain absolution. He promised to give earnest consideration to her plea. One morning he told her of a dream he had had. "I dreamed I had died and gone up to the gates of Heaven and Peter opened the door. 'Who are you?' he asked, 'Georges Clemenceau,' I replied. 'We cannot let you in; you must go back, for you did not receive the last Communion.' I asked him if he could not find me a priest who would give it to me there so that I could enter Heaven. Peter went away and was a very long time gone, and when he returned, said, shaking his head, 'I am very sorry, but I have been all over Heaven, and I cannot find a priest anywhere!'"

It was probably the same nun who asked M. Clemenceau to say a prayer for the soul of the Archbishop of Paris, Archbishop Amette, who had lately died. Clemenceau's reply to this

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appeal was : “ If the good God does not know what to do with the soul of Archbishop Amette without asking Georges Clemenceau, I am afraid I cannot help him.”

But the laugh in these matters was not always on Clemenceau’s side. Next to his house in Paris stood a convent, and in the garden of the convent stood a large tree, which Clemenceau disliked, for it blocked the light from his windows and he could not see the sky. One day he saw that the tree had been cut down, and the Mother Superior was thanked on M. Clemenceau’s behalf, but asked why she had made this sacrifice. “ Well,” was the reply, “ we could not bear the idea of anything standing between M. Clemenceau and Heaven.”

Clemenceau, in sending a reply of thanks to the Mother Superior, was unable to resist beginning his letter as follows : “ Holy Mother—for so I think I can now describe you since it is you who have shown me the light”

Nevertheless it was the Church which contributed largely to his downfall, for when the question of his becoming President was to be decided, it put forth the argument that Clemen-

Monsieur Clemenceau

ceau was an old man and, although they hoped he would live long, in the course of nature there was a greater possibility that a man of eighty would die before the end of his presidential term than a man of fifty. That would entail a secular funeral from the Elysée, and this the Church was unable to contemplate.

His levity upon religious matters doubtless helped to contribute to his downfall. Take, for instance, the following incident. When he went to Strasburg to celebrate the liberation of Alsace he was asked to visit the Cathedral. This he did, but subsequently visited the Protestant church, and afterwards attended a Jewish meeting and listened to an address by the local Rabbi. Someone asked him afterwards : “ Well, which religion are you going to choose? ” “ The Jewish, ” was the reply, “ because then I can keep my hat on in church. ”

Of one thing there is no doubt that for one reason or another unitedly before the election the Church exerted itself against him. The Archbishop of Paris used the whole of his influence, and there is good reason to believe that orders came from even higher quarters, that the

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old enemy of the Church was not to be allowed to be the official guardian of what was once known as the “favoured daughter of the Church.”

It is a peculiarity of this greatest of all wars that no young men were called to the front of affairs. This is perhaps because the most brilliant of the youth of all the nations were the first to seek glory in the battlefield, and sacrifice themselves there. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the direction of affairs remained from first to last in the hands of older men. The greatest leaders, civil and military, were all grey-haired. It was a war of old men. Take a few examples—Foch, Hindenburg, Wilson, Ribot. Of all the prominent leaders Lloyd George is the youngest, and he was over fifty when the war began. Giolitti at seventy-nine was called in to repair the damage of the war in Italy.

Clemenceau is an instance of the triumph of age during the war. Even in his seventy-ninth year he was able to pull France together for her final round with Germany and to bring her victorious out of the struggle.

Monsieur Clemenceau

In many respects he is a man of one idea. He was in Paris through the siege of 1870-1. He must have witnessed the privations of the heroic defenders; he may have gazed with those angry eyes on the humiliating spectacle of the arrogant tramp of the German legions as they entered Paris. During the Peace Conference he many a time recalled the spectacle of Jules Favre coming to the Assembly at Versailles a broken old man to report the peace declared by German insolence—how he wept in the tribune and how he died of a broken heart. On his return from Versailles, after the signature of the 1918 Treaty, in passing St. Cloud he said: “From Montmartre I saw the flames of the palace when the Germans burnt it in 1871.” These memories goaded his exhausted energies through the war and the peace negotiations.

Someone has said of him that his clock stopped in 1871. But his patriotism endured and grew. Though all others had deserted him, he still had France. For her he was living, for her he was fighting. It was said maliciously that during the sessions of the Peace Conference

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he would sleep peacefully until the word "France" was mentioned, and then he would wake up, keen and alert, the champion of France.

Now even France has deserted him, and repaid him with ingratitude. How must he feel? What has he left? When he decided to stand for the Presidency he had no doubt whatever about his election, and the preliminary meeting of the Caucus came as a thunderclap to him. Those who know him say that this was the keenest blow of all, and that when it fell he was like a broken man. What is there more hurtful and unkind than ingratitude? "You have burnt your Joan of Arc," was Mr. Lloyd George's comment to a Frenchman on hearing the news of Clemenceau's defeat. Mr. Lloyd George was engaged in a conference in Paris at the time of the election and was bitterly hurt at the course of events. He felt the old man's humiliation almost as much as Clemenceau felt it himself. "It was as though a man," said the British Prime Minister speaking of the French nation, "had wooed a girl with promises of marriage, and



Photo: Illus. Bureau.

**Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, M. CLEMENCEAU and
PRESIDENT WILSON**

On their way to the Palace at Versailles on June 28, 1919.

Monsieur Clemenceau

then deserted her at the church door." But I cannot imagine that relentless and undaunted figure as ever being broken. The scathing cynicism which is so much a part of the man must still remain, and some hapless and reckless being will soon find even now that the Tiger has still got his teeth! "A man whom no one loves, but everyone regrets," said a Frenchman of him. Fear was the dominant feeling towards Clemenceau, and love and fear cannot live together.

According to all accounts a real tiger is to be next victim, for as the guest of the Maharajah of Bikanir he has gone to India for some real sport. The Maharajah was the Delegate representing India at the Peace Conference in 1919—a picturesque and attractive figure conveying something of the majesty and mystery of our Eastern Empire. He and Clemenceau conceived a great liking for each other, and the latter took the greatest interest in his swarthy colleague. Bikanir promised him that if he came to India he would provide him with real tigers to kill.

One who saw it, describes the interview.

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between the tall, handsome, dusky maharajah and the stout little Frenchman ; how Clemenceau stood looking up at him eagerly, his face lighted up and his eyes gleaming with delight. The bargain which was made then is now being kept. He has already telegraphed home, “ Killed two tigers. But this time I held the gun.”

**SIR HENRY WILSON AND
SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON
A CONTRAST**

IX

SIR HENRY WILSON AND SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

A CONTRAST

“UGLY WILSON,” as he is known in the Army. Tall and lanky, almost gaunt in appearance, he walks with loose limbs and stooping body. But his face is attractive in its ugliness, with the lines and cross-lines that cover it, running contrary to the direction taken by any other wrinkles on any other face. They lead you on to study them with a view to finding out what this one means, and how that one ever came to be there. It is a face that makes you feel you can never know enough about it. It arrests the attention and fascinates, and when you have looked at it long, you feel you must turn and look again, to be reassured on some particular point.

His eyes are blue, piercing blue, and almost turquoise at times. They are set so far apart

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that sometimes you fancy there must be a cast, and in the corner of one of them there is a little red dot which enhances that impression. He has a scrubby moustache which does very little to cover a large, large mouth, a sensitive tender mouth. His chin is cleft. Commenting on his portrait which had recently been painted by a distinguished artist, he admitted the likeness was good, but added: "There are two institutions that are likely to bid for that portrait—one is Madame Tussaud's and the other is Scotland Yard."

His voice is deep and musical, but rather more deep than musical, full of rich expression and quite uncommon. He talks slowly as a rule, emphasizing carefully every word, and you listen attentively, for he never lets you know beforehand whether it is a joke he is telling you or a serious fact. When you know him you are inclined to think that the more serious the tone, the more likely it is to be a joke he is telling you. And then on the other hand he will wrap up some of his shrewdest maxims and judgments in the form of a humorous story. His mind is like quicksilver, you never know how and where

Sir H. Wilson and Sir W. Robertson

to catch it. He is whimsical, daring, deadly in conflict, but withal intensely human, intensely sympathetic, mischievous, imaginative. No danger could frighten this man, morally or physically. The greater the odds, the gayer would be his laugh, the more daring his joke. I suppose the easiest way to describe him would be to say he is an Irishman—and who can describe an Irishman? But to say that would not be enough, for Sir Henry Wilson has genius, and genius belongs to no special race.

He does not strike you as being the type from which soldiers are usually drawn—he is too elusive, too artistic. And yet this was the man above all others on whom the Prime Minister pinned his faith and whom he eventually made Chief of the General Staff. This was the man who, as Chief of the General Staff, foretold in January, 1918, all the details of the German attack in the following March, and prepared a plan with which to meet it, illustrating attack and defence to his colleagues by the novel method of a “war game,” worked out on a large map of the war zone. The German

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concentration was shown, the place and method of the German attack with uncanny prescience. His then superiors in the military hierarchy were disposed to treat this “game” as one of Henry Wilson’s ill-considered jokes. Foch believed in it. But the rest knew better—Henry Wilson was a jester and Foch was “*vide*,” “*épuisé*”—hence the catastrophe. When the predicted blow fell, he never once lost his good spirits, never once lost heart, was always confident that the “game” if properly played would leave the Allies the winners.

It was at this time above all that his great friendship for Foch stood the British and French in good stead. The relations between these two are in such perfect harmony as to make a misunderstanding or a difference of opinion between them impossible. As a matter of fact, Sir Henry Wilson would be the first to tell you that his attitude towards Foch is one of reverence, as towards the Master of his profession. He loves him; and the old Breton finds a kindred soul in the free and imaginative spirit of the British soldier which he had failed to find in any of the other great generals. When Foch, therefore,



Photo: Central News.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HENRY WILSON.

Sir H. Wilson and Sir W. Robertson

was made Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies, it was a lucky thing that these two should see thus eye to eye, and that the great Frenchman should have such a friend and supporter upon the British side. As a matter of fact, being an Irishman, he understands Frenchmen in a way that the ordinary Englishman never can. He loves their gaiety, their recklessness. He is never tired of telling how a Frenchman if he sees a cow in front of him on the road along which he is driving, says : “*Voilà un obstacle,*” and immediately puts on the accelerator. For them *un obstacle* is a thing to be charged, not a thing to divert one from the route.

With all his knowledge of strategy, with all his grim experience of the war, and especially of 1918, when it seemed at one time as though the policy for which he stood might prove a failure, he is still a child, and like all great men, seen at his best with children. He is the real Peter Pan, the child who has never grown up. He is imbued with the same spirit of mischief and elusiveness, and no one who has ceased to be a child can really understand him.

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There could be no greater contrast to Sir Henry Wilson than Sir William Robertson. The latter is the typical British soldier—solid, immovable, thick-necked and broad-shouldered. He moves stiffly and ponderously, like a man in armour, as though there were a ramrod up his back, and as though the joints were of cast iron instead of supple steel. It is an imposing head, very square, with a broad low brow; his face is good-looking and kindly. He has dark eyes—overhung by enormous bushy eyebrows—which twinkle at a joke but can look very stern and forbidding when he is crossed or when the “politicians” are bothering him. He has a square jaw and a full mouth overhung by a dark moustache now turning grey. He has a deep gruff voice and a brusque way of talking, rather terrifying one would imagine to those who had failed to pierce the weak points in his armour. His head is an obstinate one, and obstinate indeed he showed himself on more than one occasion. He is a self-made man, risen from the ranks and proud of it.

As a man he is an attractive character, a homely, good-natured, simple person, fond of a

Sir H. Wilson and Sir W. Robertson

good joke and able to crack one himself. As a Quartermaster-General he was admirable; never had there been a better. No one had breathed a word of reproach or criticism while he held that post. But he was never more than a butler on a great scale. Strategist he certainly was not. He designed one or two battles. They were sanguinary failures. He had no experience of such fighting as this war developed, and he had no imagination to supply the deficiency in experience. As Chief of the Imperial General Staff he had the defects of the qualities which enable a man to rise from the ranks to be a general and subsequently a field-marshall. To do this you must not behave too brilliantly. Ideas are regarded as dangerous, and if you happen to have any they should be suitably clothed in some form of conventional garment.

All these things had Sir William Robertson faithfully observed, till he found himself Chief of the General Staff, and there the difficulty began. He has the temperament which, courageous and fearless, is nevertheless entirely lacking in imagination, so that it is utterly impossible for it to adapt itself to new con-

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ditions or face altered circumstances. Steeped in military tradition, he was thus instinctively and by nature opposed to the suggestion that the war should be run by an inter-allied military staff, and all his energy and power was directed towards thwarting and preventing this departure from all military precedents, until, rather than submit to it, he was replaced by another more pliable and imaginative mind.

The outlook of Sir William Robertson is essentially insular. He reminds one of the remark made by a British Tommy in Paris during the Peace Conference: "These foreigners think we don't like them; it ain't true. We don't care an 'ang about 'em." He is an embodiment of that insular suspicion of all foreigners. He is always convinced that they are out to "do us in." Foch, Joffre, Pétain, Cadorna, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Alexieff, they were all "foreigners," and as such had but one purpose—to take advantage of Britain, her Army, her Navy, her money. So they must be watched. In many respects Allies were more dangerous than enemies. They had many more opportunities of doing you in.



Photo : Sport and General.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

Sir H. Wilson and Sir W. Robertson

It was difficult to keep secrets from them and to prevent them from getting information.

One can understand why this man did not succeed as Henry Wilson did in working harmoniously with the other Allies, and while as long as he was Chief of the Staff the inter-Allied machine did not succeed in running smoothly and without friction.

SIR MAURICE HANKEY

X

SIR MAURICE HANKEY

IF there are some grown-up people who have never been young, it is equally true that there are others who never cease to be children. Sir Maurice Hankey is one of the latter. In appearance he is youthful looking—until he takes off his hat, when one discovers much to one's surprise that his head is bald. He is short and slight, with quick, alert hazel eyes, and a head of quite remarkable shape. But it is not so much that his appearance is boyish as that the man himself gives this impression of youthfulness. Indeed, it is difficult to understand or know him until one realizes the fact that temperamentally one is dealing with a man who is still a boy. His clever, quick brain is unclouded by any bias or prejudice. It is the mind of the brilliant civil servant, who has no dealing with party or faction; but it is unfettered by convention and has fallen into no

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groove. He keeps it bright through constant usage.

He is efficiency personified. Never a paper is asked for at the various conferences but Sir Maurice can produce it from his limitless bag. He is prepared for all emergencies, all contingencies. They say no one is indispensable, but one hesitates to think what would have happened at the Inter-Allied Conferences if Sir Maurice Hankey had been unable to be there. It is he who keeps the machinery going. Without Sir Maurice these meetings between great statesmen would be like a concert where all the brilliant artistes are assembled but where there is no manager to arrange the programme or direct the proceedings.

True, he takes part in no discussions, but if he were absent the discussions would not have half their weight, for it is he who arranges for them to be recorded and circulated, and it is he, when subsequently a point is referred to, who can tell you what was decided previously, and point out the bearing of one conversation upon another. In fact, to him is apportioned the co-ordination of the subjects under dis-

Sir Maurice Hankey

cussion at the Conferences and the whole of the business transacted.

He is a prince of secretaries. When the delegates first started for the Peace Conference in Paris in January, 1919, it was arranged that the French should provide a Secretary-General, who should be responsible for the machinery of the Conferences, and the co-ordination of the Allied representatives.

Sir Maurice Hankey quietly took his place amongst the other secretaries. But it was soon found that it was he who had everything at his fingers-ends, who had ideas for the better working of the Conference, and what is more, the ability and the facilities for working these ideas out. It was his staff who would immediately supply information not only for his own Prime Minister but for almost any other Prime Minister, so that whenever two or three of them were met together, whether for private conversation or for high deliberations, the inevitable Hankey was summoned to record, to supply, in some cases to prompt, or even if not summoned, would automatically and inevitably appear.

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Eventually the official Secretary-General took a second place, though still retaining his official title, and it was Hankey to whom everyone invariably turned when anything was required, Hankey who, when other staffs were breaking down under the stress of work which they could not manage, came to the rescue and saved the situation. He became the pivot, so to speak, upon which the whole Conference turned. He was a sort of general servant of the Peace Conference.

Clemenceau himself conceived a great liking and affection for him, and whenever a document was wanted would turn to him jocularly and say : “ Come along : pull it out of that bag of yours ! ” So great was his regard for him that, meeting Lady Hankey one day, he put both hands on her shoulders and said in his impulsive way : “ Madame, I think your husband is the best man in the world.”

He brings such a fresh and open mind to bear upon a subject that it is refreshing to see him tackle every new problem as it arises. He very rarely seems to be even tired, but when he is tired it does not prevent him from being



Photo : Central News.

**SIR MAURICE HANKEY and FIELD-MARSHAL
SIR HENRY WILSON.**

Sir Maurice Hankey

busy. Even when he has an hour or two for leisure he always seems to find some new proposition to attack. And if by chance he should find a rare day or even a week-end at his disposal, he will return with a paper or memorandum written upon some point which is awaiting discussion, and produce it with the air of a pleased boy who has invented a new game. His active brain seems quite tireless.

One can imagine what a help this suggestive and practical mind could be to a Prime Minister during a great war. He had always been Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and when Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister he conceived the happy idea of making him Secretary to the War Cabinet—which was the only Cabinet then for all practical purposes. Before that no notes had ever been taken of the Cabinet meetings—no record of the decisions and no minutes of the conferences. Members would very often go away puzzled in their minds as to what really had been decided, and divergencies of opinion would often arise as a result.

With Sir Maurice as secretary everything

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was changed. There was a proper agenda circulated to every member before the meetings, and a copy of the minutes circulated afterwards, so that everyone had an opportunity of reading—and correcting if necessary—the record of what took place. It does not need much imagination to realize what an indispensable thing an efficient secretary is to a body such as this.

Sir Maurice has very little thought for or conversation about anything except his work, and here again he reminds one of the boy, wrapped up in an all-absorbing task, more than the man occupied in a serious work. It is difficult to tell why this is so, but the impression remains. Perhaps it is because, with all his pre-occupation, he is still whimsical, mischievous, with a twinkle in his eye, quite ready for a joke. Perhaps it is that he sets about his work with something of the child's artlessness and directness. He has no hobby apart from his work—his work is his hobby, and his plaything too. You may try to divert his attention and think you are succeeding, but your vanity will receive a check if you think you can distract him for very long.

LORD RIDDELL

XI

LORD RIDDELL

EVER since at Mr. Lloyd George's suggestion Lord Riddell came to Paris to superintend the British Press during the Peace Conference there, he has become an institution at all the subsequent inter-Allied Conferences, meetings, and conversations. His is no easy task. Pressmen at all times are not the most docile people in the world to manage, but imagine them in Paris, for instance, where, like flies round a honey-pot—and rightly so, for the measure of honey they secure is the measure of their success—they are clamouring for the maximum amount of news they can obtain. Imagine them being put off from day to day with the minimum amount of information from headquarters, and then imagine Lord Riddell acting as a buffer between the Peace Conference and the Press—often receiving the maledictions of the former for his importunity and much asking, only to be reviled

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by the latter when he returned to them with the crumbs which had been vouchsafed to him, and which did little enough to satisfy the hungry mouths awaiting their rations.

It was no enviable position this—to know that you could not entirely please one set of friends without letting the others down, and yet knowing that it was vital to both sides that friendly relations should be maintained. Yet he succeeded in accomplishing this difficult task, and in keeping the majority of the British Press representatives very loyal to himself and to the British Delegates, though they knew quite well that by adopting the methods of some of their less scrupulous colleagues they would be able to secure the coveted news and information, and that nothing could stop them—excepting their sense of loyalty—from publishing it if they chose to do so.

It does credit to this great newspaper man that he was able to maintain these friendly relations throughout between politician and Press. I think it must have been largely due to the fact that the Press knew that they could trust him to do his best for them, that he considered

Lord Riddell

them first and foremost, and that though he was a personal and intimate friend of Mr. Lloyd George, yet in this case friendship would not interfere with his official duty, and that as head of the Press he was there to serve them to the best of his ability.

Nevertheless, it must have been a daily anxiety to him, and his face during these periods of trial was often very careworn. There were times when the Press was almost on the verge of revolt at the treatment meted out to them, and the meagreness of the information which they were allowed to publish, for they perceived the foreign Press (not to mention certain British journalists) purchasing news from foreign sources at the price of their support to foreign interests ; and not understanding all the difficulties of British Delegates, and the necessity in many cases for keeping things secret while they were actually under discussion, they were very naturally apt to resent the differentiation between themselves and other journalists. But these crises were always safely tided over by the good offices of Lord Riddell, who knew exactly where the breaking-point would come, and

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exactly how much his faithful pressmen could stand. For to a journalist news is the breath of life, and it reflects high credit upon the British pressmen that the majority of them, while knowing that certain channels were open to them whereby they could obtain unlimited—if coloured—information, agreed to publish only that which was doled out to them by those in authority.

Lord Riddell is not a politician. Although it is difficult enough at times to draw the dividing line between news and politics, nevertheless he always strives to keep the boundaries well defined, and those on both sides who know him best will tell you that he succeeds in this fine distinction. “No, that is politics, and I prefer not to touch it,” I have heard him say very firmly.

Perhaps that is why his friendship with Mr. Lloyd George has remained unbroken during so many years. When you regard the political friendships which have been made and broken during that time, you realize what a strain political associations must be upon any friendships. As a sagacious old politician is reported to have remarked to Mr. Lloyd George at the beginning of his career as a Minister: “There



Photo: Sport and General.
LORD RIDDELL.

Lord Riddell

is no friendship at the top." It is well then for the sake of this friendship that Lord Riddell has seen fit to refrain from party politics.

The fact is that his temperament is not political. He is no partisan, seeing only on one side of the fence, and content that the other should be debarred from him except as a trespasser. He likes to roam on both sides of the fence, taking a keen and intimate interest in what is happening in every direction. Not the smallest detail escapes his attention, for he is essentially and amazingly inquisitive and acquisitive. His curiosity is remarkable and is his outstanding characteristic. He has a natural aptitude for acquiring news; he thinks in paragraphs.

One might be tempted to think that the possession of newspapers is the reason for this, but I am rather inclined to the view that the existence and popularity of the newspapers are the result of this compelling characteristic. No incident is too small for him to notice, no trivial fact escapes his alert mind. Everyone and everything concerns him, and contributes to his interest in life and human nature. He probes and prises to find out the why and the wherefore

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of this and that, and he will take immense trouble to satisfy himself as to the governing factors, the interests, in fact, the smallest details in the lives of the people with whom he comes into contact.

I have seen him stop strangers on the road, talk to them, and when he has finished you will find that he has enough information about them to fill up their National Registration form, Income Tax form and Passport, in addition to having ascertained their peculiarities, their hobbies, their desires and their shortcomings. And the people thus addressed will not exhibit any surprise at the catechism which has been hurled at them. Indeed on the whole they appear to be gratified at the interest which this kindly and benevolent looking gentleman has seen fit to take in them. It is not a morbid and idle curiosity. It is a genuine and deep attraction to humanity as a whole. Human nature in its vastness is his sphere of interest. No detail is too small to excite his attention, and no human being so insignificant as to escape his notice.

Lord Riddell is sentimental, but cautious. His head rules his heart. But his nature is a kindly one, and a tale of woe will never fall

Lord Riddell

unheeded upon his ears. His sympathies are with the working classes, and he understands and studies minutely the life of the working man, the injustices which he suffers, the trials to which his women-folk and his children are subjected. He seems to understand especially well what constitutes the small cares and little every-day worries of ordinary working class or middle class people. It is perhaps his passion for detail that has led him to observe and study these things where they would escape the attention of others. I suspect that very quietly (for he is no party politician, as I have already said) he is working hard with the means that lie in his power to ameliorate the conditions of the poorer classes.

He has no use for cant or humbug, and hypocrites suffer short shrift at his hands. He sees through them at once. He never forgets a fact, and his brain is a store of information, a faithful and accurate register of the fruits of his inquisitive mind. For this reason he is a most interesting and enlightening companion. It is very difficult to mention a person or a subject of which Lord Riddell is not able to give you a complete encyclopædic account.

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He is a man of simple tastes, and he leads a simple life. He has a town residence simply because he must live somewhere. But he is a busy man, and has neither the time nor the inclination for social life. One might think that the owner of prosperous newspapers would have a sumptuous country house. But no. The taint of megalomania has passed him by, and he leads a life devoid of luxury. A bare and cheerless room in the Club House at Walton Heath is the only country residence which he boasts of, and there he repairs after a week of hard and crowded work to seek recreation in golf, which he loves.

In appearance he is tall, thin, even gaunt-looking, with a slight stoop. His clothes are usually shabby and seem to hang loosely upon his spare limbs. His face is lined, and full of purpose, lighting up now and then with a genial and attractive smile. His eyes are grey and searching, and you feel that they are probing to discover the very secrets of your soul, the very weaknesses of your character—in fact, you feel as indeed is the case, that here is a masterly lawyer putting you through a cross-examination, and that from him very few secrets can be hid !

MR. PHILIP KERR

XII

MR. PHILIP KERR

PERHAPS one day Mr. Philip Kerr will write his experiences in connexion with the personalities of the Peace. If he does, it will be interesting. There is perhaps no one on the inter-Allied staffs who has interviewed so many people belonging to so many different nationalities. It was only natural that during the Peace Conference, when the fates of countless countries were involved, the representatives of those countries would wish to obtain a hearing of the Prime Minister of the most powerful, perhaps, of the Allied countries. One never knew that so many nationalities existed. Peoples with names one then had never heard before—though they have since become familiar—sent their delegates to Paris in 1919 in the hope of there enlisting powerful champions for all their wrongs. It was certain that Mr. Lloyd George could not himself see all those people, or if

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he were to see them, give them the time they required for stating their case. It was equally certain that all these people ought to be heard, for justice cannot be ensured without knowledge. To Mr. Kerr then was deputed the task of a preliminary interview with each and all of these miscellaneous emissaries, and to such purpose did he devote himself to this task that his is at this day an international name. Indeed it is almost safe to say that his name is better known abroad than in his own country. He is a small Foreign Office in himself.

But these heterogeneous interviews are not the only matters which occupy Mr. Kerr's busy life. He is often at the side of the Prime Minister when matters of urgent importance in foreign policy are being discussed. His brilliant intellect, coupled with his long study of world affairs, enables him to bring to bear a point of view which is peculiarly valuable. In delicate matters he has often been the Prime Minister's liaison officer with the representatives of Allied powers. They have learnt to trust him and rely upon him. Delegates from foreign countries put their case to him, and he in his



Photo: Illus. Bureau.

**Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, LORD RIDDELL and
Mr. PHILIP KERR.**

Mr. Philip Kerr

turn presents it to Mr. Lloyd George. Thus an immense amount of work is spared a busy Premier, who otherwise could not attempt to cope with all the demands upon his time.

Had President Wilson had a man like Philip Kerr upon his staff in Paris, he might have escaped the tragic breakdown which occurred afterwards no doubt as a result of too much heavy work of a detailed order. There is perhaps no man who is not a politician who has such an intimate knowledge of affairs as he has. He is a brilliant writer, too. It is a matter of common knowledge now that the reply to Brockdorff Rantzau's arraignment of the draft Peace Treaty, a reply which evoked such praise and admiration from all, emanated from him, and many other historic documents (including the preamble to the draft Treaty) came originally from his pen.

In appearance he is tall and thin, with a striking, boyish face. He is loose-limbed, and as to his clothes—the less said about them the better, for he gives them very little thought! You get the straightest and most searching of glances from these deep and smiling blue eyes,

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which have disarmed many a man who went there to criticize. His hair is brushed back from a wonderfully broad, high brow. It is an extraordinarily youthful face for one who holds so responsible a position, and whose mind is such a store of experience. He is kept young perhaps by his philosophy and creed, which do not allow him to meet troubles half way, or to be cast down and worried by the minor difficulties of everyday life : but rather to give out to those around him help and joy and friendship, so that they instinctively turn to him when in trouble and need.

Conventionally, his manners are abominable. Unconventionally, they are the most charming in the world, for he puts you entirely at your ease at once with his naturalness, his gentleness and his understanding. He has no use for pose or polish ; he just is himself. He is the most entirely unselfish-conscious person I have ever known.

It is significant of minds like his that they are meek in spirit, humble and unboastful. Philip Kerr cares nothing for fame or position or praise. He is the last man in the world who

Mr. Philip Kerr

would push for publicity. The things he cares for are the verities of life, the things of the soul and spirit, and material methods do not concern him at all. To distinguish between the True and Untrue, to cast away the shams and preserve the realities, to separate the things that matter from the things that do not matter, these are the aims and desires of the man who is well known as Mr. Lloyd George's right hand.

In many things he is in character the complement of Mr. Lloyd George. He is a dreamer and a thinker—more of a thinker than a dreamer; Mr. Lloyd George is a man of action. He is full of fire, impulsive, passionate, breathing energy and vitality; Philip Kerr is calm, placid, dispassionate. The energy and vitality are there because he summons it and wills it to be, but Mr. Lloyd George is energetic and vital because he cannot help it. The latter has his moods and whims, and at times is just a little difficult; the former is ever the same, never downcast, always even-tempered. He has had many unpleasant jobs to do, many unpleasant people to meet. He wins through

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every time with a quiet smile. Meek, yet knaves will get no advantage over him. Quiet, the most blustering and aggressive will go away sobered. He does not know the meaning of a lie, and his trustfulness is such that people do not often lie to him. He unconsciously lifts people to the level of his serene mind.

It would be surprising if a man holding a position that he does, and possessing such power of influencing people and policies, had no enemies. He has few, perhaps no personal enemies, but there are many who would grudge him the position he enjoys. And, as is inevitable with a man in a place of high trust, the story goes round that he is a sinister figure, wielding a sinister influence, that there is a Machiavellian purpose behind all that straightforward dealing. Similar stories were circulated about Mandel, Clemenceau's secretary, and yet there are no two people more self-reliant and less likely to succumb to insidious influences than Clemenceau and Lloyd George. No doubt in the case of Philip Kerr these insinuations have originated with people who have been quietly turned down and shown out of the door, having

Mr. Philip Kerr

failed to persuade him of the soundness of their intentions. The fact remains nevertheless that while one set of people have proclaimed him to be the Secret Head of the Bolsheviks in Europe (this was actually told me by a high official in tones of despair), another set of people are equally convinced that he is an agent of the Roman Catholic Church, setting a trap for the feet of an unsuspecting Prime Minister!

THE MAJESTIC

XIII

THE MAJESTIC

THE centre of activity and the hub of the Peace Conference, so far as the British Delegation was concerned, was the Hôtel Majestic. At the end of December, 1918, and the beginning of January this great building, built and owned, they say, before the war by Germans, was transformed into a little British colony in one of the most attractive quarters of Paris. A colony of colonies, too, for there were represented all grades of British society, from the greatest and most famous of politicians to the typists and little messenger boys. The Majestic was the "British Delegation," and British it should be. No matter that there was a French staff in the hotel before it was taken over—these were duly packed off and a British staff installed—cheery little waitresses from Manchester, Wigan and such places. Solid British food, too, replaced the more intricate and mysterious

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dishes of the French restaurant. A large amount of food was actually brought over from England. A British telephone exchange was installed, and lines put up direct from Paris to London. A daily aeroplane service was organized between these two cities, and dashing flying officers added to the personnel of the Delegation. British cars waited in a row outside the hotel, with British Tommies as chauffeurs. A branch of Lloyds Bank was established within the hotel. Never was there a hotel so entirely transferred from one nationality to another. With truly British invasiveness we took possession of it, to the utter exclusion of any "foreigner."

But when all is said, after the autocratic *coup* had been completed, there never was an institution so entirely democratic as the Majestic. It was the home of famous diplomats, of titled people, of world-renowned statesmen. It was also the home of humble clerks and typists and secretaries. The social barrier, if it existed at all, was reduced to a very thin thread. The gathering at the Majestic reminded one of nothing so much as a large family, the

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elder members of which had attained distinction and importance, the younger members still being kept in their proper places, but throughout existing a feeling of kinship and brotherhood, the sense that they all stood for the same thing and were working for the same end.

The distant relatives were there, too, in the shape of the Colonial representatives. This, too, served perhaps to strengthen the bond of fellowship which existed, for Colonials are the least snobbish of mortals, and caste or title means little or nothing to them. India, perhaps, with her representatives, remained a little more aloof, partly because her sense of caste is ever strong and compelling, partly because East and West must ever remain apart. The Maharajah of Bikanir and his subordinates added not a little, nevertheless, to the interest of the scenes, with their bright uniforms and their dusky skins.

Naturally, khaki was everywhere predominant, from a Field-Marshal to N.C.O.s and privates. There were generals who were attending the conferences to give important advice and take momentous decisions; there were red-tabbed officials of the War Office,

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some of whom had seen glorious service, and some had never been to the fighting line at all. None the less valuable for all that were the brains of the latter, with their special knowledge of countries and conditions, of statistics or geographical formations, which was continually in demand in settling the vast world questions before the Peace Conference. There were youthful subalterns who fetched and carried for the mightier ones of their tribe, many of whom though so young and boyish had seen years of active service. To them this conference in Paris was a welcome change and relaxation. You had the same categories in the naval ranks, the admirals there to take their place in the front ranks of the Conference : the younger naval men on their staffs to fetch and carry for them.

Then you had the Foreign Office officials ; the heads, men of experience and knowledge, wiser perhaps, in spite of themselves, for the revolution of diplomacy which the war brought about ; the youngest members of the Department, a little superior, a little exclusive, dilettante, refined, each one boasting a social or intellectual accomplishment altogether apart

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from his Foreign Office work, which perhaps was rather of secondary importance. You had clever women there too, some with the gifts of many languages, some doing valuable service as secretaries, all putting in hard work and often long hours.

General Smuts was an outstanding figure in this busy crowd. Charming of manner, keen of intellect, with dapper appearance, he still had in his eyes and face the look of the man who has been in a tight corner, who is for ever on the watch, for whom every other is a potential enemy. You might be on the most friendly terms with him, he would talk with a frankness and sympathy that was disarming, but always at the back of it all, at the end of all the paths which you thought were leading to the Man, there was a gateway with the words "No thoroughfare," shutting out something which, if not entirely hostile, must nevertheless remain altogether apart. There was something romantic about Smuts's position in England during the war and the Peace Conference. A British General relates how the last he saw of Smuts at the end of the South African

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War was the back of the latter when, as England's foe, he fled from the British army. The next time the General saw him Smuts was seated at the British Cabinet table as a member of the British War Cabinet, and as such having access to the secrets that even the rest of the Cabinet did not know!

Mr. Massey, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, was another familiar figure. His is an attractive and lovable personality. Tall, stout, with a fringe of white hair round an otherwise bald head, a florid complexion, kindly grey eyes, and a gentle if rather shy manner, one was instinctively drawn to him by his simple genuineness. His thorough honesty and reliability made him a valuable member of the Conference. He it was who, though called back to New Zealand by the elections, preferred to stick to his job as one of the signatories for the British Empire of the German Treaty.

Mr. Massey hurried off after signing the Treaty to catch a boat at Cherbourg. But alas! there was still the Polish Treaty to be signed, and without Massey's signature it would not be complete. The Secretary from

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the Quai d'Orsay hurried to the station, hoping to catch Mr. Massey before the train left, but the train was out of the station before he reached it, and there was nothing for it but to motor to Cherbourg in the hope of catching Massey there. He arrived there as the boat was on the point of starting. Jumping into a motor launch he reached the ship and went on board. The signature was obtained, but not before the ship had already started on her way. The unfortunate secretary was therefore forced to go with her all the way to Panama, taking with him the original Polish Treaty, now happily complete.

General Botha was there too throughout the Conference—a noble and arresting figure—dressed in the khaki which had once been the garb of the enemies who were hunting him down. Even at that time he was in bad health, but the light in his keen eyes was bright, though his face may sometimes have been drawn. A powerfully built figure—a typical Boer—with closely cropped dark hair, broad, low forehead, shaggy brows and small pointed beard, he still spoke English with a

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pronounced foreign accent. The British Empire had no truer representative than he during the Conference. This was the man who had once been the enemy of Britain, but who, when danger threatened the Empire, and he might have taken advantage of the moment to rouse the people of South Africa and throw off British rule, preferred to remain loyal to his word, and fight for the Empire to which he had pledged himself and to which he now belonged. What a tribute to British rule! It is interesting to remember in this connexion a conversation between Botha and Mr. Lloyd George during the Colonial Conference of 1907. Mr. Lloyd George then asked him : "If there is war, can Britain count upon your remaining loyal to the flag?" "If Germany declares war on England," was Botha's reply, "there will be seventy-five thousand armed Boers ready to drive the Germans out of South Africa." He was a great personality, a great force, honoured and respected by all. Botha's influence on the various committees upon which he sat during the Peace Conference carried enormous weight; and he used it always unselfishly, loyally, as the

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big man that he was. Once, at a meeting at the Rue Nitot during the Peace Conference, he said, regarding the Treaty : “ We must not be vindictive. It is a great mistake with a beaten enemy to carry things too far.” And, laying his hand on Milner’s shoulder, he added : “ Don’t you think so, Lord Milner? ”

Lord Cunliffe and Lord Sumner—“ the Twins ” as they came to be called on account of their joint work on Reparations—were also among the inhabitants of the Majestic. The latter was a hard-faced man with signs of irascibility on his countenance—a difficult personality. Lord Cunliffe was his very opposite in these respects : a tall, stout figure with a kindly genial face, which large moustachios did their best to make formidable, and a deep gruff voice. His one desire was to get back to London, and every few days he would announce his intention of leaving Paris, where he was compelled to stay as the Peace Conference was prolonged from one week to another, or from one month to another. According to him, he loathed it, but it was his fashion to grumble at everything with a twinkle in his

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eye, and to present a ferocious exterior while retaining a heart as gentle as a child. He had many friends, and his death was a great blow to all who knew him.

Sometimes conferences were held at the Majestic, conferences between the members of the British Empire Delegation, sometimes conferences at which the Prime Minister met the members of the Press. Then there was an additional stir and bustle, as the well-known figures of Ministers and Colonial representatives arrived for the meeting. It is certain that the delegates must have preferred the atmosphere of conferences held in the Majestic to that of the French Conference Room at the Quai d'Orsay. The latter was noted for its heat and stuffiness, and when the room was crowded it became almost unbearable. One of the victims is reported to have said that the delegates in that room breathed the same air as the Duc de Morny ! It was a constant struggle to overcome the feeling of drowsiness which would steal over them as a result of the terrible closeness. The principal delegates succeeded fairly well, for naturally their minds had to be always on the

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alert. Clemenceau was the exception, and as he was the President, and it was for him to put business through, there was often a loss of time through lack of drive on his part and through the necessity which sometimes arose to re-explain to him decisions which had been taken when the old man had been too sleepy to follow what had happened. He became particularly bad after the attempt made on his life, but it was only natural that this should be so, and the extraordinary thing is that this should not have affected him more than it did.

The Majestic, on the other hand, was light and airy, and there was no excuse for sleepiness there. Nor was there any desire on the part of the delegates to fall asleep, for these meetings were usually summoned to settle some pressing question, and no delegates could have been more on the alert than those of the British Empire !

The dining-room of the Majestic presented at any time a scene of vivid interest. The personnel of the British Delegation alone rendered it a gathering worth studying, even to the members themselves, who perhaps towards

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the end of the Conference rather tired of the place. But the monotony of the scene was daily relieved by the appearance of new arrivals. Great people came and went as they were summoned to appear before the Conference. Field-Marshal Haig had come to see the Prime Minister; he took his place in the dining-room with the greater and lesser celebrities. His presence there on one occasion called forth an anecdote concerning a great artist who had been staying at G.H.Q. for the purpose of painting war pictures. He had produced a wonderful if terrible picture of the men in khaki going up to the front line on one of the light railways—huddled together in grim discomfort, their faces tense and drawn with what they had already passed through and what was about to confront them. The picture brought out the whole grey-ness and irksomeness and remorselessness of the war, and as Haig looked intently at the finished thing the artist expected a tribute to this. The Field-Marshal examined the canvas closely and still more closely, and then turned round and said : “ I thought so ! It is our sixty-millimetre railway ! ”

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The Prime Minister himself, though not a regular figure, owing to the fact that he did not actually live in the Majestic, nevertheless often came there for a meal, for he loved that jumble of high and low, which appealed to a mind so entirely free from snobbery. Marshal Foch, too, would come from time to time as a guest. M. Clemenceau, I do not think, ever came there, for he never dines out. Lord Robert Cecil, with members of his family and staff, was a permanent figure at these meals. Famous artists, such as Augustus John and Sir William Orpen, were often seen there as guests of members of the Delegation.

Interesting officials from the Eastern and other parts of the British Empire—actual and potential—would become inmates of the hotel for a few days while they delivered their reports and messages to the heads of delegations. The Emir Feisal and his staff, picturesque in their Eastern dress, with grave, unfathomable countenances, took their place from time to time in this assembly, preserving an aloofness and a quiet dignity which made one realize, as the Emir himself said in addressing the Peace Con-

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ference—as he allowed his gaze to travel round the room and rest in turn upon the representatives of Rome, Greece, France and Britain—that he and his people were a civilized nation when the people represented in that room were barbarians. At first certain prominent members of London society, “always seeking after some new thing,” and hearing tales of the wonders of the Majestic, came to see and be seen; but, finding that their presence in this busy entourage did not excite the notice and attention to which they were accustomed, they ceased to appear.

For all that was said at the time by malicious tongues about the frivolity in official circles at the Majestic, I think it can safely be said that no community was more consistently hard-working than that installed there. Many of the members there found it impossible to claim for themselves even the Sunday respite which was certainly due to them. The fact too that it was never possible to get away for long from the hub of busyness and activity was bound to become a certain strain upon the nerves, and who would therefore grudge the members of the

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Delegation the amusements to which they had resort?

Exception was taken at the time to the fact that dances were held at the Majestic every Saturday evening. Exaggerated stories were spread about at home of the orgies which took place on these occasions, of the expensive dresses which were displayed by members of the female staff; so that one might almost get the impression that dresses and dancing occupied most of the attention and thought of members of the Peace Conference Delegation. It was to the interest of some newspapers to make a scandal out of the simple amusements of the Majestic; and the small allowance given to members of the Delegation in order to cover the expenses which they would naturally incur in living away from home for a prolonged period was immediately seized upon as a basis for a series of stories about the extravagances and absurdities of the Conference.

Similar efforts have been made, inspired from the same source, on the occasion of every subsequent Conference to excite public indignation against hard-working officials. The fact

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that some members of the Delegation took tennis rackets with them to the San Remo Conference was regarded as monstrous! Anyone who witnessed the Saturday evening dances at the Majestic Hotel (the expenses of which were naturally paid for by members themselves) would have seen instantly that such stories were the product of malicious tongues and were entirely without foundation.

They were simple scenes, these Saturday evenings, but how attractive and unusual! The large hall downstairs was approached by a flight of steps which led down to the dancing floor, and often these steps would be thronged by higher officials of the Conference who came to watch the dance. Mr. Lloyd George would come for a short time to contemplate the bright scene; Lord Milner, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Curzon were often spectators; I have seen Mr. Balfour studying the jazz band with a rapt intentness, entirely oblivious of everything else. Lord Fisher came specially one evening to take part in the dancing, and danced with as much energy and enjoyment as the youngest member of the Delegation. The Maharajah of Bikanir



Photo : Central News.

THE MAHARAJAH OF BIKANIR
Arriving at the Palace at Versailles.

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was a frequent attendant, though he never took part in the dancing, but would gaze with a look half-puzzled, wholly absorbed, on these Western rites. Lord Riddell would put in an appearance more out of curiosity than sympathy. Anyone who paid a passing visit to the Majestic, or who was summoned to give evidence before the Conference, was taken as a matter of course to the dance on Saturday evening.

There were often almost as many spectators as there were dancers. I have seen Marshal Foch and M. Venizelos on the steps of the hall, gazing with kindly interest upon the enthusiastic performers. In fact, there were very few members of the Conference, whether high or lowly, who did not at some time or other appear on these occasions. And it was a truly democratic scene. Here again you had the important official and the youngest typist mixing together without a trace of snobbery or awkwardness. Some of the girls' frocks were simple ones, made often by their own hands; some were more expensive and elaborate, according to the means of the wearer. The only ones to which exception might have been

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taken were those worn by members of the fashionable world outside, who sometimes came to take part in the dancing.

There will probably never be another gathering quite like the British Delegation in Paris during these months. There are still British Delegations there, and in other parts of the world; but this piece of Whitehall planted bodily in Paris, modernized and brought up to date, and flourishing and functioning there regardless of its surroundings, this collection of great and small into one tiny area, and placed, as it were, under a magnifying glass, was unique and can never be repeated. Subsequent conferences have been on the same pattern, but they have been but off-shoots of this great experiment, and though naturally full of interest and importance, have lacked the glamour, the tenseness, and the significance of the Peace Conference in Paris.

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